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# **Religion and Higher Education**

**1989 Paine Lectures in Religion**

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***The Changing Role of Religion in Higher Education***

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***Richard H. Jesse: Religion and the Making of a Modern University***

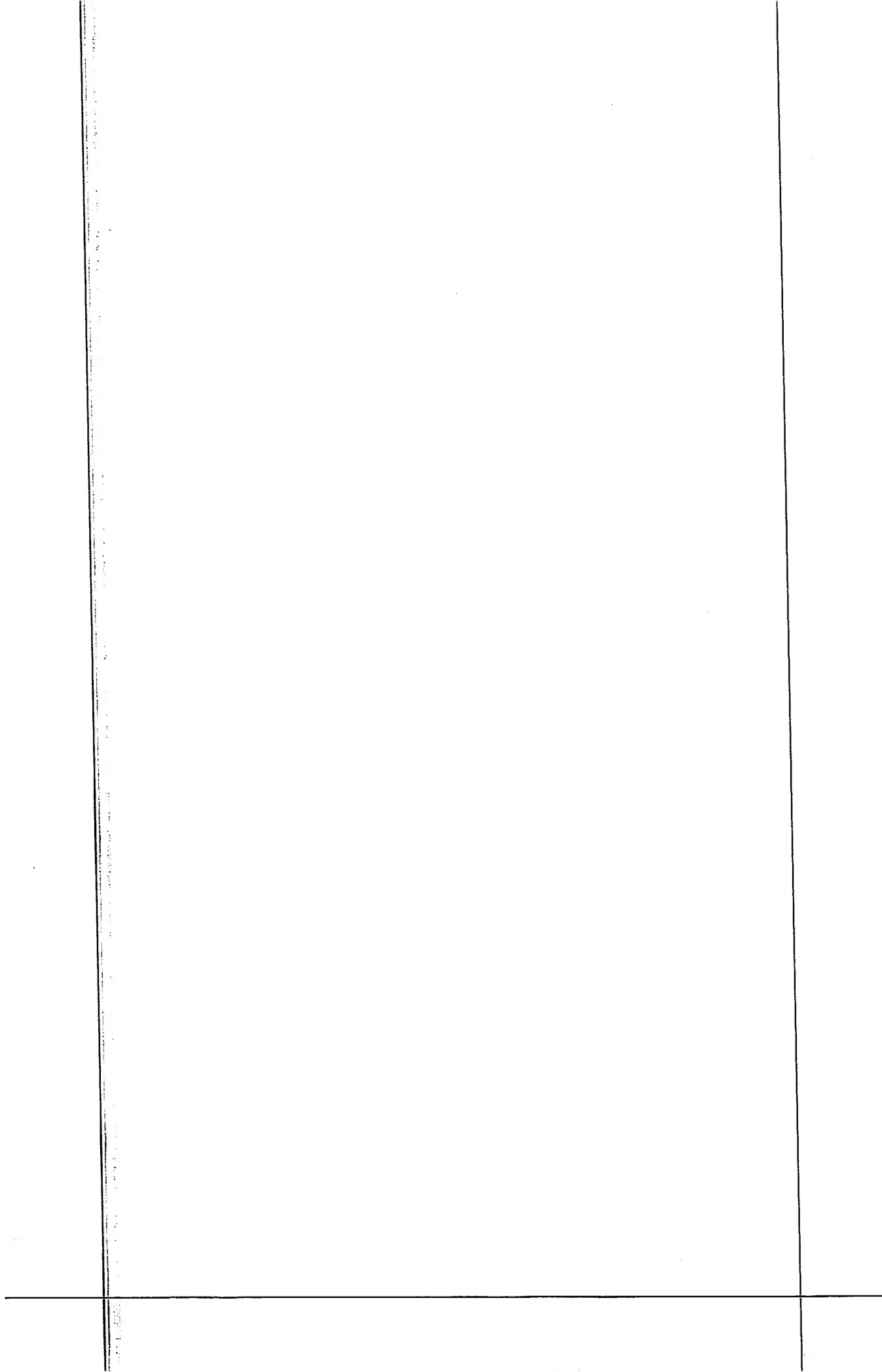
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# Introduction

The Rufus Monroe Paine and Sofie Hougaard Paine Lectureship in Religion was established in 1977 by the will of Catherine Paine Middlebush (1891–1975) as a memorial to her mother and father. Mrs. Middlebush was the wife of Frederick A. Middlebush (1890–1971), twelfth president of the University of Missouri from 1935 to 1954.

The Paine Lectures in Religion were first guided by the Committee for Religious Studies, whose members were drawn from the faculty of the College of Arts and Science at MU. More recently, responsibility for the lectures has been assumed by members of the Department of Religious Studies. This department was established in 1982 and, since 1983, has arranged for publication of selected Paine lectures (*see page 27 for a complete listing of available publications*).

This year marked the Sesquicentennial of the founding of the University of Missouri. As part of the Sesquicentennial Celebration, the Paine Lectures focused on the impact of religion on higher education in Missouri and in the United States more generally. The two lectures were delivered on September 27, 1989. The first, by Professor Martin Marty of the University of Chicago, introduced the issues and arguments that have shaped the interaction between religion and education in this country, and that continue to challenge reflection on the meaning of education. The second lecture, by Professor Moses Moore of Arizona State University and a former faculty member of the University of Missouri, was the result of his extensive research in the archives and manuscript collections of the University. The University of Missouri has had a dramatic history, as reflected, for example, in the controversies concerning religion that the presidents of the University addressed. Professor Moore examined this history, focusing in particular on Richard H. Jesse, President of the University from 1891 to 1908 and a pivotal figure in the development of MU into a modern university. President Jesse confronted the explosive mixture of religion and politics, the question of the place of religion in a modern university, and the issues of religious and academic freedom. His responses, both private and institutional, brought the University of Missouri into the forefront of a major national shift in American educational and religious history. This movement continues today, and we believe that these lectures offer an important contribution to the current discussion of the appropriate role of religion in public education.

The Department of Religious Studies and the Paine Lectureship Committee for 1989–1990 wish to thank the Sesquicentennial Celebration Committee of the University of Missouri for helping to make these lectures possible.

Joel P. Brereton  
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# The Changing Role of Religion in Higher Education

## *A Liberal, not a Merely Secular Culture*

In order to make fresh comment on the changing role of religion in higher education in the United States, it is valid to call into question the term over against which religion and religious studies are usually poised: "secular." Of course, by almost any definition of the term, America is a secular society. That is, no ecclesiastical power shapes or dominates it. People are free to fashion meanings apart from formal reference to the transcendent, and they do. Legally, the society demands and even permits no formal religious presuppositions to stand behind the status of citizens or the rule of law itself. No single sacred symbol system unites the parts which make up the societal whole. In all those ways and many more the description "secular" applies.

If America is best described, or wholly described, as secular, then what one does about religion and the study of religion takes on the coloration of an address to that term. Religion then is seen as belonging to prehistory and history, to the past times when there was presumably not yet much differentiation between the sacred and the profane spheres of existence. Religion is then seen as the proper subject for students of "primitive" societies, vestigially religious ones, or hierocracies like Iran, but not of developed cultures, ones in which the practice of organized religion is in decline, or where church and state are separate. Religion in such understandings is and has to be marginalized, seen as relatively irrelevant, or even exiled from the campus and quarantined in its isolation.

America, along with the rest of the West, to be sure, *is* secularized, but it is not only thus to be described. There are increasingly good reasons to look for other terms which better account for the peculiar situation of religion in the United States. The society, in William F. May's term, fairly "reeks of religion." But to say that is not yet to help account for religion's presence, to see its promise and limits, or to provide a rationale or suggestions for methods in its study.

One candidate to replace or parallel "secular" is "liberal." University of Wisconsin political scientist Robert Booth Fowler, for one, has been promoting that candidate. The choice is not utterly novel, nor is the term beyond criticism, for it comes laden with connotations which can cause confusion. If we associate "liberal" simply with eighteenth-century approaches to economic life, as they are propagated in the twentieth century by people like Milton Friedman, we shall fail to understand its promise in the academic study of religion. Similarly, if it is restricted to meanings associated with the political "L" word which has hurt recent Democratic presidential candidacies, it will also mislead.

The liberalism which provides the spiritual envelope around our culture or the environment to which we instinctively relate—one might invoke and slightly alter Langdon Gilkey's word that we are to it as the Greeks were to "Hellenism"—has different characteristics. Fowler is not alone in pointing to several outstanding standard features, all of them relevant to the study of religion.

First, liberal cultures are marked by a reflexive resort to *skeptical rationality*. People who do not know the names of Descartes and Kant live in the aftermath of their inventions and share their suspicions of seeking to measure learning and society by norms exempt from skepticism, doubt and criticism, or where rationality has no access. There are, of course, pure antirationalist religious enthusiasts in rich supply in modern America. Many observers of the culture keep their eye on citizens as these seekers find omens and signs in everything from astrology through crystals and holistic healing to apparitions and miracles. Yet invention, technology, modern scientific medicine, and even the separation of church and state, all cherished by the vast majority of citizens, could not have come into being and could not exist without the exercise of critical reason. Even many fundamentalists will urge that the groundwork of their reasoned world view is rational, and that they are the truly scientific thinkers, while other supposedly modern world views are themselves mythic, albeit of a Cartesian sort.

Skeptical rationality lies behind the United States Constitution, even though it was written by generally reverent men who were friendly to religion. They simply would not commit the citizens to a specific metaphysic or, for that matter, to any consciously recognized metaphysic. They solved the political problem of religion by making formal religion irrelevant to constitutional purposes. In the contemporary laboratory scientific methods prevail, and one does not earn a Ph.D. or obtain a federal grant which certifies their claims based on faith in the unseen and the unverifiable.

The university, properly built on the foundations of skeptical rationality, is organized in such a way that its participants therefore have difficulty giving more than an historical accounting of the human resort to the sacred, the transcendent, the divine, the "Other." The university also allows for social scientists to observe that human beings justify kinship bonds, rites of passage, and the endowment of their joys and sorrows with meaning, by resort to religious myth, symbol, and ritual. But the university's style of study is to end with such observation; getting closer to religion seems upsetting in the academic context.

The second feature of a liberal culture is attitudinal more than reasoned: it cultivates a climate in which almost inevitably and with many salutary consequences, citizens develop a sense of *tolerance bordering on indifference* about religion. Widespread indifference about a subject makes it an unlikely candidate for university-level scrutiny. Once religion has been classified a "private affair" and thus seen as publicly inconsequential, citizens are expected to develop civil casts of mind and favor consequent polite actions. The record of the world around—take Lebanon, for starters, Americans are ready to say—suggests something of the problem when intolerance is linked with weaponry. Or take radical pro-life and pro-choice factions in the American abortion controversy, and see what the adducing of religious claims does to uglify the debates. Better keep religion at a distance.

When the survey researcher comes by and asks whether people would vote for candidates of differing religious persuasions, or would be ready to see them live next door, an overwhelmingly positive attitude surfaces. It is not in good form to caricature other faiths, to blaspheme, or even to criticize the claims of another ecclesiastical group down the block with whom one differs. A corollary of these vital civil attitudes is the devitalization of the claims of religion and the act of neutralizing them all. Tolerance comes to be the weakest of virtues, as if born of a belief that beliefs do not matter. That is what is meant by the indifference so many foreign observers see in Americans who hold to religions, but are not ordinarily passionate and show no impulse to disdain others. But in so doing, one notes, they make religion a less urgent subject for academic inquiry: it belongs to the decor and not the real stuff of life.

The third common feature of what we choose to call a liberal culture is a celebration of *individualism*. With the other two features, this is a heritage of the Enlightenment. Like those two, it represents hard-won achievements, cherishable elements of a pluralist society without which a republic could not survive. The celebration of what Glenn Tinder names "the exalted individual" belongs to the Western religious traditions and the humanisms of Greece and Rome, the Renaissance and the Enlightenment as well as to Judaism and Christianity. The alternatives to autonomy and individualism exact enormous prices in the modern world: they permit totalitarian systems, persecutions, or repressions, and they encourage mindless conformity and the stifling of creativity in the interest of the herd.

Individualism, moreover, when seen as the chief characteristic of the religious quest, further removes religion from the life of the university. Of course, it remains a subject for reductionist psychologists, who see personal religion to be an important element in private life. But it lacks communal, social, or public consequence and therefore does not much impinge on the fields of vision of most university disciplines.

Over against the liberal cultures setting boundaries around religion, one does well to see it as part of a complex ecosystem surrounding the university and of which the university is a part. To disturb any part of it alters the relations of every other part. If we conceive of the culture secularly, we treat religion one way in the academy; if liberally, it takes another form. If one lingers to observe how citizens treat religion in a liberal culture, something catches the eye which sooner or later demands notice in the university. That is, individuals and the public at large give evidence that they find a liberal culture *spiritually* unsatisfying. They live with it pragmatically, enjoy its mixed benefits, celebrate its not inconsiderable virtues, but they persistently keep finding that there are many things such a culture cannot produce.

So it is that in the modern or postmodern world, as in those which preceded it, people persist in using myth and symbol to put words on forces which otherwise would overwhelm them in their randomness, or as chaos. They refuse to let skeptical



rationality exhaust all the meanings, and they testify to the fact that they sense a *mysterium tremendum*, even if it comes in banalized forms of televangelism, trivial religious best-sellers, New Age therapies, astrology, ESP, a sense that Something Is Out There, or that a superhuman or supernatural being or power or force or Person acts upon them and that they, in turn, should respond. In other words, they persist in being religious in myriad ways.

In the face of mere tolerance, they find that opinions *are* significant and that religious opinions indicate access to other orders of meaning. They also move beyond mere opinions to certify something much deeper, the value of convictions. They claim that certain kinds of convictions and commitments do matter. They observe, for instance, that there was a religious convictional base behind so much of the dissent which helped freedom-seeking people outlast Marxist-Leninist oppression for seven decades. It underlay the motivations South Africans and South Americans rely upon if they seek to endure and transcend regimes which persecute and would kill them. They notice the power of conviction in the acts of healing and caring in their own society, or in demands for justice, as in the careers of the Dorothy Days and the Martin Luther Kings. They find intelligent people reckoning with religious significations in the life of the mind, and have to notice that ideas about the spirit have consequences. They find themselves, when tested, not panindifferent. They are capable of finding threat or promise in one world view or thought pattern over against another. They use elements associated with religion as a means of pushing beyond mere tolerance, or they see millions of their fellows using these—and they need university-level inquiry to make some sense of all this.

Third, the religious impulse, while it too is “privatized”—if I may use a term only social scientists could love—also takes corporate form. It is said that two-thirds of the hours and dollars Americans volunteer are “donated” through religious agencies. For all the erosion that occurs at the edges of cults, sects, churches, and synagogues, these institutions survive. Thus they provide some sort of fabric of shared meanings and experience for three out of five citizens. People who make them up organize to promote constitutional amendments and to bar the sale of pornography; they collect funds for refugee relief and schedule innumerable activities for reform, charity, education, and healing; they come together in the act of worship, which Romano Guardini called *zwecklos aber doch sinnvoll*, pointless but significant. Not to understand the social power of religion is to make one vulnerable to getting inconvenienced by some of its forms. Therefore university-level research concerning people who pursue meaning in communal symbolic existence has become important, even urgent.

### *What Happens in the Narrowing of the Cultural Model*

The consequences of the narrowing of a culture conceived as liberal to one reckoned with as secular are evident in the history and present conditions of the ideal-type university of modern America. But just as citizens give part of their hearts and minds to such a culture, while reserving another part for religion, so scholars and intellectuals in the public realm are seeking ways to make room for a variety of ways to determine what they should value spiritually.

Here I would suggest that we can see in the university some analogues to the political argument proposed by Kent Greenawalt in *Religious Convictions and Political Choice* (Oxford, 1988). Greenawalt, like Fowler, does not believe that what he calls “secular rationality” should be given privileged status to the point that it holds a monopoly in a free society. Many publicists and political philosophers, for instance, argue that in all political debate the original positions of the parties must be characterized by such rationality. Yet when the rights of the environment, the fetus, the animal, or any thing or one who is voiceless (and mindless?) are at stake, it is clear that we cannot and do not move only by the norms of secular rationality.

Therefore, other modes of reckoning come into play: intuition, attention to symbolic life, response to myth, the life of community, memory, hope, affectivity—all these are part of conscious political debate and choice. This does not mean that in a free republic religious groups deserve or can get a hearing by demanding that everyone respond positively to the revelations from a divine order which only their subcommunity has received and regards as true. Instead, there must be “public accessibility” to the claims of religious groups. But this is not an insuperable problem, because most of the members of most of these groups are not antirational and are indeed reasonable. And the life of their communities, their memories, their intuitions, is subject to debate and is accessible for public appraisal.

The university which wishes to do justice to the reality around it and in it is finding that not to pay attention to the “publicly accessible” claims of religion and religionists is to distort perceptions of the culture and to fail to draw on all the resources available for dealing with it.

As for tolerance, it is becoming ever more clear that to establish the university on the basis of norms which exclude appeals to Otherness or which overlook such appeals in the lives of contemporaries, is falsely to privilege the mythic context of skeptical rationality. Now and then one hears voices—I think of Jonathan Culler, a literary critic at Cornell, complaining that his colleagues of note pay too much attention to sacred texts. Was not the university, he asks, founded to dispel superstition, to scorn such scriptures, to celebrate the pure light of reason? It is possible to see such dispellings, scornings, and celebrations as part of what university people do. But to rule out inquiries about the methods one uses or the substance one finds in sacred texts is to gut the libraries of much of their lore, to force amnesia on a culture, and to close off horizons from which imaginative suggestions for the future might well emerge.

As for individualism, the university, especially the tax-supported one, set out to resolve the problem of religion in a society where church and state were to be separate, by seeing the classroom as a wing of the state and then seeing only the off-campus chapel, divinity school, or seminary to be the legitimate representations of religion. To see religion in its social forms as a legitimate contender for academic inquiry—not, of course, I must say, as a focus for worship or as a sphere from which one can teach the Truth About Life—is an approach which remains controversial. But old-fashioned university prejudices are being countered and often overcome. Religious communalism, more and more scholars recognize, is a far too threatening and challenging phenomenon to go entirely unmonitored by the university.

### *How the University “Solved” the Religious Issue*

It is a compliment to the power of religion that universities found it a touchy subject, one which needed to be treated with care and even kept at some distance. The history of American higher education illustrates this. Thus Thomas Jefferson, in helping found the University of Virginia as a pioneering state-supported school, found it necessary to push religion to the “confines,” as he and his contemporaries put it. There was a place for a library with metaphysically religious books off campus, in seminaries, and a place for morally significant books on campus in the university itself. The churches often were coconspirators in this division and distinction. They mistrusted each other on campus and in the classroom, and forced the exiling of religion in the acts of seeing to the limitation or purge of each other from campus precincts. On the confines, religion came to be “confined.”

As for tolerance, the university tended to generate a climate in which most ways of reckoning with reality were permitted on campus, but religious modes, or even the study of religious modes, came to be suspect. Tolerance turned to intolerance. I recall a conference some years ago at a state university where “philosophies of history” were the subject. A substantive philosophy of history in the nature of the case involves some act of faith. To make comment on the meaning of history, one must deal with it as if there can be some knowledge of its outcomes, something which lies beyond the realm of purely empirical inquiry and testing.

So there were lectures and sessions on Marxist, feminist, progressive, “black,” and positivist philosophies of history—and then one on biblical or Judaeo-Christian outlooks: my assignment. It was by far the most controversial, even though 85% of the citizens of the state would claim to adhere to such a world view. I pointed out that one virtue of people who study religious world views is that they become adept at—pardon the crudity for the sake of clarity—“metaphysical crap-detection.” That is, as in the world of thievery, so in the world of the discerners among world views: “it takes one to know one.” Advocates of other “philosophies of history” have exposed the suppositions of scholars of religion, but scholars of religion in turn have become accomplished at detecting unquestioned assumptions and unexamined metaphysical presuppositions of their critics. Such cross-examination lies at the heart of university life.

I should make very clear that this does not call for the miscategorization of religious claims and inquiry. Thus, for one controversial illustration: “scientific creationism,” if taught as a science, would represent a misplacing of categories alongside the evolutionary assumptions behind, say, microbiology. To study creation, creation myths, creation stories, or the claims of “scientific creationism,” however, does belong in the humanities and social scientific disciplines. Or: to teach the commandments of the God of the Christian faith or the stories of the gods of Hinduism and the claims they make on humans as the truth about life is not the business of a university. To study that they make these claims and how they substantiate them is.

### *Did the Narrowing of the Field Work?*

After two centuries of narrowing the field of vision of the university along the canonical lines of secularity, many self-critical people in universities have questioned the results. This is not the place to detail the many serious questionings about skeptical rationality: is it not also built upon a mythos? Do not the paradigms off which it lives need to be subjected to critical inquiry? Do they not have a history? Do they not change, and in their changing lead to a relativization of all but the most current paradigm?

My current bookshelf has works by Charles Taylor, Leszek Kolakowski, George Steiner, and many more who state the case (assuredly, not in a way which seeks privilege for religion, but in a way that subjects religion to university inquiry and debate) for reckoning with what we might call, and what some of them call, the experience of “Otherness.”

In the works of Charles Taylor, a study of classic texts and modern literature suggests that the modern search for identity is informed in the light of the reference to the transcendent. Leszek Kolakowski, a Polish ex-Marxist and enduring humanist, argues that we have passed too far out of a hierocratic culture to revert to it, but are too far into the spiritually vacuous elements of a secular culture to be satisfied with it: we have and need and will have “myth.” And George Steiner, recognizing that he may lose points in the academy because of its secular ethos, has come to the point where he contends that the profound acts of poetic and artistic imagination occur in the face of the sense of the Presence, and they give some articulation to that experience.

To cite these three and a cloud of witnesses like them is not to establish a point, but to serve my purposes as an historian: to show that the postmodern climate is encouraging the development of an array of critiques about the way universities did go about their business in respect to religion. The point has nothing to do with proving the existence of God, demonstrating the benignity of religion, or showing the *a priori* relevance of all of its forms. It instead reports on the cases being made that suggest reasons for reexamination of the role of religion in university life.

I may have overportrayed the problems raised for religious studies by the university organized on the secularistic model, without having paid enough attention to the problems religionists first posed. In the earlier phase, some of them tried to proceed along creedal and confessional lines. In the years toward mid-century when they were first experimenting with the return of religious studies to tax-supported schools, some tried the "Bible Chair" model. In that case, the campus religious foundations taught courses, sometimes for half credit. This pleased the larger taxpayer constituencies but did nothing to assure high quality teaching of religion.

The second approach, common in the 1950s, was sometimes called the "zoo" theory. In it, efforts were made at representationality, at having many species lined up. A Catholic would teach Catholicism, a Jew would head Judaic studies, a Hindu had to be present for Hinduism, and the like. The religious studies department had to be organized much like the "Churches" section of the telephone company's Yellow Pages is. By then there was one improvement: the accreditation and credentialing was entirely in the university's hand, and a higher level of academic integrity was apparent. The teachers were usually trained in pluralist environments and no longer used the university for promoting protected confessional approaches. Still, there was more accent on the "equal time" provisions that characterized religion on mass media of communication than there was on who was the best scholar of a certain subject. An ex-Baptist might be a better expert on Buddhism than many practicing Buddhists, but would have had no chance to show this. What is more, it was learned that particularist religions were not much involved either positively or negatively with the idea of representation. Religious studies scholars, one recalls, report to deans of the humanities, not to religious leaders.

So it was that a third model developed. This time, in and around the 1970s, the advertised approach was neopositivist. That is, it was assumed that because religion was a controversial subject which aroused passions and led its confessors to be prejudiced, there had to be great care taken to assure that the teachers were objective, distanced, uninvolved. In a time of insecurity about the place of religion, there appeared what we might call a "more secular than thou" attitude in many religious studies departments. Only gradually did it become clear that colleagues in other departments were not interested in having the religion departments look or be so distanced from religious communities or from the potential of finding positive values in religion. With the development of the phenomenological method, in which teachers were aware of their presuppositions but "bracketed" them in order to understand the objects of their study, much of the pressure was off. People taught religion the way they taught literature or philosophy: now with intensity and empathy.

Of course, in these phases the subject matter had changed. John Herman Randall once noted that in theological ages and under ecclesiastical rule, scholars studied God; in the modern pluralist setting one studies religion. Along the way, scholars came greatly to enlarge the concept of religion itself. No longer was it seen as only that which occurred in the sanctuary or under the auspices of ecclesiastical bodies. Scholars spoke of religion in general, civic or public religion, or even private faith as being part of the anthropological condition. Using the broadened definition helped them locate the study more securely in the humanities and to establish partnerships with other scholars. Of course, the change left religious studies faculties without precise boundaries. If they suggested that when anthropologists or psychologists went "really deep" and reached peoples' ultimate concerns they *then* were religious, these scholars did an injustice to such disciplines. When they contented themselves with what we might call the ecclesiastical side of religion, they left too much unmonitored. But such definitional concerns are preoccupations in all the disciplines and are not unique to religious studies experts.

### ***Changing Role, Unfinished Business***

This reflection on the changing role of religion in the university has not even attempted to do justice to the affective and experiential sides of religion. If the essay made such an attempt, it would be valuable and even necessary to discuss the aspects of religion which have little to do with the legal, economic, or curricular setting of the university. It would have to do justice to the world of students, their experience of religion and nonreligion, to the world of chaplains and pastors and ministries which deal with the intellectual side of religion, and so much more. These are all legitimate topics on which I may have opinions and which I consider to be of vital interest in the vocational and cultural spheres. Rousseau once said: "You can expect my thoughts to be consistent with each, but you cannot expect me to assert them all at once." So they do not come up here.

In the present context, the invitation is that I join in the celebration of the anniversary of the University of Missouri and, with my partner in this joint lectureship, recall the heritage of solutions and the enduring problems left by Richard H. Jesse and other pioneers. The legacy has to do chiefly with the intellectual, curricular, and implicitly (for a state-supported school) legal implications of a changing role for religion. We do not live in Jesse's world. Some things against which he had to war are no longer ominous. Some perspectives on intellectual and religious life available to us would not have occurred

to him. But it is possible to do what Pope John XXIII asked religious orders to do: to reform themselves in the light of the intention of their founders—to whom they could not go back.

What has happened since the founding of universities like this one in the past century has been first a progressive distancing from the professed religions which dominated in the culture—to the point that religion was often not formally studied at all—to a recovery of interest in religion in general. The religious renaissance in Islam, many parts of Christendom, and elsewhere has given global impetus to the study. The presence of militant religious groups which threaten the peace of those who do not agree with them have made religious studies an urgent issue.

The changing role of religion in universities: what we have discussed is simply the latest phase in a developing situation. In a free society, where church and state are legally separated, where the academic disciplines are under constant revision, and where religion is again a controversial topic, it is hard to picture a moment coming when religious studies are secure and conveniently defined. One is tempted to say that if such a moment comes, the university should engage in critical examination of the discipline or area; what is being studied can then hardly be religion. For religion is a subject which is designed to disturb complacent cultures and remain a challenge to universities as they set out to comprehend the world around them and the enormous legacy which their libraries, textbooks, curricula, and faculties have logged in their memories.

And, then, perhaps, to help change the world, for better or for worse.

## **President Richard H. Jesse: Religion and the Making of a Modern University**

**A**lthough the memory of Richard H. Jesse is embodied in the central building of the Columbia campus of the University of Missouri—namely, Jesse Hall and auditorium—few alumni, students or even faculty are familiar with Jesse's many contributions to the furtherance of modern education at the University, as well as throughout the state and nation. As noted by a number of his admirers and no few of his critics (who were less enamored of this development and its repercussions), Jesse, during the course of his presidency (1891–1908), forged the University of Missouri into a “modern” institution. In doing so he was forced to confront the ever controversial and often volatile question of the place of religion in a modern state university and the corollary issues of religious and academic freedom.<sup>1</sup>

Jesse himself once remarked, “There is perhaps in America no harder position to fill well than the presidency of this university.”<sup>2</sup> One of the factors which made his tenure so trying was “the religious issue”—the role which religion and religious concerns were to play in a modern, pluralistic and by law nonsectarian public institution of higher education, located in a state and region where religious concerns and institutions were especially powerful and influential. Jesse's responses, both private and institutional, placed him and the University of Missouri on the cutting edge of a major transition in American education and religion. The era encompassing his presidency witnessed the shift in American higher education away from the dominance of the “denominational college” and its explicitly religious-based curriculum to the growing preeminence of the universities and their more “secular” agenda, curricula, and leadership. Mark Noll points out: “Between the Civil War and the Great Depression the Christian character of much of higher education passed away with the birth of the modern American university.”<sup>3</sup>

Of related significance was the changing image, role and status of the officers and faculty of institutions of higher learning. The old nineteenth-century paradigm of the pastor/president epitomized by Mark Hopkins and Francis Wayland, and attempted with mixed results by a number of Jesse's predecessors at the University of Missouri, was no longer viable in the large, pluralistic modern university. Under the myriad pressures of modernity (most notably the impact of evolutionary thought, new disciplines, growing numbers of students and increasing demands from industry for technical expertise), these institutions increasingly “named professional academics rather than ministers as presidents. Businessmen replaced clergy as trustees. [And] in the hiring of faculty, specialization (represented best by the new Ph.D. degree) became more important than Victorian morality or Christian beliefs.”<sup>4</sup> Jesse and his supporters, as well as his critics, were well aware of this trend. His dilemma and responses are of central importance because at issue were concerns which shaped the course of higher education, not only at the University of Missouri but throughout the state and nation. Moreover, these concerns continue to be at the heart of the long-running contemporary debate concerning the proper role and place of religion in public education. In this sense, then, an examination of Jesse's responses to the issue of religion and higher education remains a very relevant topic as we engage in reflection and celebration of the University Sesquicentennial anniversary and especially as we fast



approach the ten-year anniversary of the Department of Religious Studies—a development which is to some extent a legacy of Jesse's vigorous efforts to define and defend the role of religion in public higher education.

In 1891, Richard H. Jesse, then teaching at Tulane University, was elected to the presidency of the University of Missouri. As a native Virginian, educated at the University of Virginia, Jesse symbolically reaffirmed the historical linkage between the Jeffersonian tradition of secular public education and the University of Missouri. It was, in fact, the Jeffersonian model of higher education embodied at the University of Virginia which inspired the earliest statutes pertaining to the status and role of religion at the University of Missouri. The Geyer Act of 1839 which empowered the establishment of the University of Missouri as the first public institution of higher education west of the Mississippi was modeled on the founding statutes of the University of Virginia. In keeping with this model, there were to be no religious qualifications for hiring of officials and faculty or for the admission of students. But consistent with the popular conception as well as practical realities of education during this era—an era when higher education was dominated by Christian values as well as denominational activism and rivalry—the founders and early supporters of the University found it impossible and undesirable to keep religious concerns apart from the fledgling institution. Its role, as reflected in the term "Seminary of Learning" used in early descriptions of the proposed institution, was to be that of imparting spiritual as well as intellectual edification.<sup>5</sup> This prevailing and paradoxical conception of the symbiotic function of religion and education was firmly rooted prior to statehood in the Ordinance of 1787 which stipulated that since "religion, morality, and knowledge" were "necessary for good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged."<sup>6</sup> Subsequent legislative acts at both the federal and state levels would further amplify this popular rationale for higher education and eventually inspire the Geyer Act and legislation establishing the University of the State of Missouri.<sup>7</sup>

It was this perception of an intrinsic link between religion, education and morality which inspired local citizens of Boone County to join in an ecumenical effort to insure the location of the proposed "Seminary of Learning" in Columbia.<sup>8</sup> The founding board of trustees of the University included ministers from the dominant denominations of the region, and one of the first two members of the faculty was a minister.<sup>9</sup> However, in anticipation of future problems, the board stipulated that there was to be no more than one professor at the University from any one religious denomination.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, the Geyer Act as amended in 1843 further stipulated that no "professors or tutors" of the University "shall exercise the functions of a bishop, priest, clergyman or teacher of any religious persuasion, denomination, society or sect, whatsoever, during his continuance in office."<sup>11</sup> Although the founders of the University of Missouri were apparently concerned at an early date to minimize religious controversy, sectarian strife (often intrinsically linked with partisan politics) would be a dominant force throughout much of the first century of the University's existence. This unholy alliance of sectarianism and partisan politics often undermined the administrations of Jesse's predecessors and occasionally threatened the continued existence of the University.

A brief review of the religious issue as confronted by a number of Jesse's predecessors is helpful in understanding and appreciating his contribution to this extended controversy.

### *Lathrop's Administration*

It is significant that in 1841, during an era when 67% of the state universities and 85% of denominational schools chose ministers as presidents, the Curators of the University of Missouri elected as its founding president John H. Lathrop, a layman.<sup>12</sup> Although hailed as a "high-toned Christian gentleman," Lathrop was vocationally committed to the educational enterprise rather than the ministry and understood the pedagogical and ministerial vocations to be separate though in some respects complementary spheres.<sup>13</sup> More consistent with the general trend in higher education during this era was the introduction at the University of Missouri of a curriculum which included required courses in Christian Evidence and Moral Philosophy.<sup>14</sup> In colleges and universities throughout the nation, these courses were generally offered in the senior year, usually taught by the president of the institution and intended as the capstone of the educational experience. Their goal was "to provide final Christian integration of the college career and final exhortations concerning the kind of citizenship good Christians should practice."<sup>15</sup> Also attesting to the religious, specifically Protestant, character of the University was the institution of daily chapel services.

Despite such evidence of the explicitly religious character of the University, Lathrop's pedagogical and religious predilections were viewed as less than orthodox by some of his detractors and resulted in increasing tensions between himself and the more traditional segments of the religious community.<sup>16</sup> Consequently Lathrop's lack of clerical status and his religious and pedagogical heterodoxy, compounded by an alleged alliance with "the Whig-Presbyterian clique," were as much factors in his subsequent resignation "under pressure" in 1849 as was the fact that he was a Yankee, charged with antislavery and pro-Northern sentiment.<sup>17</sup>

In an address delivered in 1843 at the dedication of the University's chapel, Lathrop himself noted the pervasive and negative influence of sectarian tendencies upon the University. He also hailed what he perceived as the beginning of a shift in higher education away from clerical leadership and noted its pedagogical implications. No doubt it was with reference to his own detractors that he stated:

Indeed the sentiment that the presidency of our literary institutions belongs of right to the clerical profession, is in fact passing away, with the assent and approbation as I very well know, of the eminent and the well judging of the clergy themselves. It is after all to narrow-minded laymen, that I am afraid we must ascribe all of vitality the sentiment has left. The sentiment is indeed passing away; already do we find the presidency of several of our eastern institutions, holding the first rank among American colleges, occupied otherwise than by clergymen.<sup>18</sup>

Actually, Lathrop was premature in his hailing of the transition from clerical leadership and the related demise of sectarian influences in higher education. Both would continue to dominate American higher education in general and Missouri higher education in particular well into the Post-Civil War era.<sup>19</sup>

### *Shannon's Administration*

The heyday of sectarian influence and conflict at the University of Missouri seems to have occurred during the presidency of Lathrop's successor, Dr. James Shannon. It is of interest to note that in contrast to Lathrop, Shannon was a life-long Southerner, vigorous defender of slavery, and conservative "Campbellite" (Disciples of Christ) minister.<sup>20</sup> During his tumultuous presidency of the University of Missouri, the increasingly interrelated and volatile issues of sectionalism and sectarianism threatened to destroy the University.

Prior to accepting the presidency in 1850, Shannon insisted that two conditions be met. The first, in response to the amended Geyer Act, was that "there be no objections to ... [his] continuing as heretofore, to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ." The second condition was that his term of office be unlimited.<sup>21</sup> The agreement of the Curators to both conditions placed the University of Missouri in line with the majority of the nation's institutions of higher education—both private and public—which shared the traditional pastor/president model of leadership. This traditional emphasis and its often aggressively evangelical agenda was to be reflected in various aspects of Shannon's administration. Shannon would in fact spend much of his presidency preaching and conducting revival services throughout the state.<sup>22</sup> A favorite sermon and speech topic was the legitimacy of slavery—a legitimacy which he vigorously justified by reference to Scripture, Natural Law and his own published pamphlet on the philosophy of slavery.<sup>23</sup> Shannon's religious and pedagogical emphasis and agenda were apparent in his inaugural lecture, which was in essence a vigorous sermon on the University's responsibility for the moral and religious training of students. With this emphasis Shannon was fulfilling what had been perceived as a major lapse in the pedagogical agenda of Lathrop's administration. However, there was soon growing concern among non-Disciples that Shannon was using the University and his presidency to inculcate both political and sectarian doctrines. His critics charged that he was attempting to turn the University into a training school for "Campbellite ministers" and that he planned to pack the faculty with "Campbellite Democrats."<sup>24</sup> Shannon in turn claimed that such charges were unfounded and issued from the "Whig-Presbyterian Clique" which had unsuccessfully supported Lathrop.<sup>25</sup>

Not surprisingly, reverberations of this sectarian and politically rooted controversy were felt among faculty and students. It had fatal consequences in at least one case which involved the shooting death of a student by a University tutor whom the student had physically assaulted and labeled a "devilish Campbellite Shannonite" and a "damned Campbellite Democrat."<sup>26</sup> Such incidents and related charges that Shannon spent most of his time on church work and political speeches was enough to induce the State Assembly to appoint a legislative investigating committee charged with assessing whether Shannon was neglecting his presidential duties and whether party politics or sectarian doctrine were being taught at the University.<sup>27</sup> Although the investigating committee's majority and minority reports, based upon testimony from Shannon as well as students and faculty, proved inconclusive, the 1855–1856 session of the State Legislature revised the governing statutes of the University. Specifically banned were the two conditions under which Shannon had accepted the presidency. The new governing statutes limited the presidential term to six years and reiterated that no faculty member or president of the University "shall preach or exercise the functions of a minister of the Gospel or any of the learned professions during his continuance in office."<sup>28</sup> Some proponents of the latter measure explicitly argued the unconstitutionality of appointing a practicing minister to the presidency of a state university, supporting their claim by quoting Thomas Jefferson on the dangers of combining Church and State.<sup>29</sup>

As intended, the revised governing statutes forced Shannon, who was unwilling to give up his ministerial vocation, from office in 1856. In commenting on Shannon's resignation, Jonas Viles noted that Shannon "was always in his interest and activities first a minister of the gospel, secondarily the president of a denominational college, and in no real sense the president of a state university."<sup>30</sup> In fact, Shannon would later affiliate with an institution more compatible with his political, pedagogical and denominational interests, becoming president of Christian University, a Disciples institution in Clinton, Missouri.<sup>31</sup>

In the wake of this latest controversy, the *St. Louis Intelligencer* observed that no matter who was in control of the University there was always conflict over politics and religion. Nor was the newspaper without supporters of its prescription that the University be sold at auction.<sup>32</sup> Little wonder that Shannon's immediate successor, Professor William Wilson Hudson, a layman, scrupulously attempted to avoid all and any activity which could be interpreted as partisan or sectarian.

Hence at the beginning of his administration Hudson, in a decided break from tradition, arranged for Professor Sterling Price, Jr., Normal Professor and Instructor of Greek, to lead each morning's chapel service.<sup>33</sup> No doubt, however, it was the brevity of Hudson's administration (1856 to his death in 1859) rather than his religious and political sagacity that spared him the nemesis of his predecessors and successors.<sup>34</sup>

### *Minor's Administration*

Continued sectarian and political tensions and their debilitating impact on the University were again publicly lamented during the 1860 installation services of Hudson's successor, Benjamin B. Minor.<sup>35</sup> An address delivered on this occasion by J. W. Tucker, a St. Louis lawyer and member of the Board of Curators, is instructive in providing a sense of the intense sectarian and political pressures to which the President and other officers of the University were subject during this era. The newly installed officers of the University were warned by Tucker of an "unreasoning bigotry" which would "demand submission and service, in the sacred name of religion; and upon ... [their] refusal to obey ... will threaten ... [their] extermination." He explained that

One man, or one party in politics, or one sect in religion, is greatly exercised for fear some other man's politics, or some other man's religion, will be promoted by the University, at the expense of his politics or his religion! And he very much desires therefore, to have his politics, and his religion represented in the faculty and solemnly installed in the University. And if you don't worship by his liturgy, why then you are infidels and tearing down the university.

Nevertheless, they were to be ever mindful of that fact that they were "officers of a state university," elected to "to hold up, build up and keep up the university." He concluded:

[Y]our duty, as true men, must make you sufferers, therefore, to a greater or less extent, of the fanaticism of these crazy malcontents in Church and State.... Be not surprised at this for there is no spirit, so inaccessible to reason; so implacable and unmerciful as fanaticism wearing the name and clad in the raiments of religion.... [but] to exert the influence of State institutions of learning in favor of some intolerant sect or party in religion would be a prostitution and perversion of its influence by an act of sacrilege.<sup>36</sup>

Less graphic was President Minor's inaugural speech, which addressed the related issue of increasing rivalry between the University and the State's denominational schools:

It is right and proper for each denomination to establish and maintain educational institutions, in which there can be a more direct and distinctive religious instruction than can be attained in a general state establishment. But every state has her duties to discharge to her children, among which that of providing them with liberal means of the highest intellectual culture is well recognized here, as elsewhere, to be one of the most imperative. In performing this solemn trust, a state can not, nor can those who represent her, evince any sectarian or denominational bias.

Although disclaiming narrow sectarianism, Minor, an active Episcopal layman, shared the prevailing conviction that religion, specifically the "Christian religion," did have an important role and place in the university. The pedagogical implications of this conviction were made explicit as Minor assured his listeners that the traditional interpretation of Christian Revelation would remain the normative guideline of the University and its curriculum. While evidencing an awareness of the new scientific, intellectual and academic developments which were beginning to elicit concern as to their religious and pedagogical impact, he explained:

Of course, we mean here to teach literature and the sciences in their most advanced states, with all the newest discoveries and views that are well founded and can stand the test of examination. But in what spirit in reference to Divine Revelation? Shall we teach physical science in the spirit of the "Vestiges of the natural History of Creation?" Shall we teach ethnology in the spirit of the authors of "Types of Mankind"; or in that of a Cabell, a Pendelton, and a Curtis? Shall we teach Geology in the spirit of cavil and skepticism? Astronomy in that of a mere grandiloquent deism? Ethics in that of a barren utilitarianism or even an enlightened self love? Metaphysics in that of atheism, or pantheism?

The evidences of the Christian Revelation as contained in the Bible are now better established than the foundations of any ... inconsistent new discovery, or fact, in physical science can be; and so of all the speculations and supposed demonstrations of metaphysical science .... Revelation itself is from God and must stand; so that if any science present a supposed fact, or discovery, or an approved theory, that can not after fair and candid criticism be reconciled with any just interpretation of Scripture, it should be rejected.<sup>37</sup>

As the newly elected president of the University of the State of Missouri and Professor of Moral and Natural Philosophy, Minor reassured the Curators that he would endeavor to instruct his charges in not only proper knowledge but also Christian morality and ethics: "It is under the guidance of these general principles, most respected Curators, that I shall



ask your sanction of the instructions in mental and moral philosophy which I shall endeavor to impart to the students of this University.”<sup>38</sup> Minor’s pedagogical priorities and agenda were consistent with the general patterns and expectations of American higher education during this era. However, he was of the last generation of university presidents to be so assured of the normative role which Christian Revelation could or should play in shaping the curriculum and priorities of higher education in state universities. In fact, Minor’s brief administration (1860–1862) encompassed the beginning of a new era in both American higher education and American religion. It was to be an era in which “the assured results of modern science and scholarship” rather than “Divine Revelation” or confessional orthodoxy would become dominant factors dictating the curriculum and agenda, personnel and perceptions, of American higher education. It was the era which would usher in the modern “secular” university.<sup>39</sup>

### *Read’s Administration*

**T**he impact of these developments was, however, somewhat delayed at the University of Missouri by the intense partisan politics and sectarian strife evoked by the Civil War and its immediate aftermath. During this period the University was literally struggling for its survival. None of the interim presidents who succeeded Minor, including a reappointed Lathrop, challenged the prevailing religious status quo. Even Daniel Read “of liberal and emancipated theories” (former Professor of Mental and Moral Philosophy at Wisconsin) apparently shared and advanced the traditional assumptions of a symbiotic relationship between Protestant orthodoxy, morality and higher education.<sup>40</sup> In response to the encroaching and threatening currents of modernity, the officers of the University appear to have made an even more vigorous effort to maintain an explicitly orthodox identity and agenda for the University. The importance of the required courses in Moral Philosophy and Evidence of Christianity was reaffirmed by the Curators, who designated Read as both President and Professor of Mental, Moral and Political Philosophy.<sup>41</sup>

The Curators also made chapel attendance compulsory for both students and faculty. In light of the controversy which would ensue over this issue during Jesse’s administration, the committee report explaining the rationale for this action is instructive:

[I]t is to be understood that the State University is the university of a Christian people, with a Christian civilization and Christian ideals; and that while discarding sectarian teaching, the university can represent no other than a Christian community. Hence your committee will recommend, according to the practice of American colleges, the daily assembling of students and professors for worship, with the reading of the Bible, in the chapel of the university, not only on account of religious and moral effect, but as tending to good order, regularity, and the social unity of the university body.<sup>42</sup>

Similarly, Read’s plan for reorganization of the University included a section entitled, “A Christian University for a Christian People.”<sup>43</sup> However, like most of his predecessors, he was necessarily concerned with the dangers of a more narrow sectarianism and warned, “When any sect seizes a state university to hold it for their own benefit, it is robbery.”<sup>44</sup>

Although managing to successfully navigate the treacherous shoals of sectarianism, Read eventually fell victim to its sibling—partisan politics. His strong pro-Union views were deemed unacceptable to conservative Democrats with proslavery leanings who had regained control of the state legislature. His forced resignation in 1876 set the stage for the restoration of the pastor/president model of leadership at the University of Missouri.<sup>45</sup>

### *Laws’ Administration*

**T**he thirteen-year presidency of Read’s successor, the Reverend Samuel Laws (1876–1889), marked the last hurrah for the traditional model of piety and pedagogy at the University of Missouri. Born in Virginia, Laws secured a Bachelor of Divinity Degree from Princeton Theological Seminary and began his career as a Presbyterian minister in St. Louis. He was subsequently called to Westminster College as Professor of Physical Science and in 1855 was elected its president.<sup>46</sup>

Upon being approached by the search committee of the University of Missouri, Laws indicated his desire to accept the position but also made known his uncompromising commitment to the ministerial vocation. In his initial dialogue with the Curators regarding the statute which forbade the hiring of a practicing minister as president, Laws argued strenuously and successfully that the roles of president and preacher were not incompatible:

My experience tells me that teaching is not incompatible with preaching occasionally, but that on the contrary it is a help to it and is helped by it, and I am perfectly sure that any man who bears the name of a minister of the gospel who should accept your presidency at the cost of being silenced from his ministry, would thereby forfeit all claim to your confidence and respect. Insidious proselytizing and fanatical bigotry are much more likely to be found under the loose garb of pretended indifference than in the man who is outspoken and open before the public with his convictions and sentiments.<sup>47</sup>

Apparently impressed by his conviction and logic, the Curators, in tacit violation of the University's governing statutes, consented to allow Laws to preach occasionally, provided that he did not accept a charge.<sup>48</sup>

Laws' hiring appears to have been thoroughly consistent with the Curators' perception and profile of a university president. Just prior to his election, the Curators had roundly debated the demands and expectations of the office and reaffirmed the president's special role in advancing the spiritual as well as intellectual maturation of the students.<sup>49</sup> As spiritual as well as academic head of the University, the new electee was expected to preside over the mandatory chapel services as well as teach the required courses on Moral Philosophy and Evidences of Christianity. Thus in 1876 Laws was inaugurated as President of the University of Missouri and Professor of Mental and Moral Philosophy and of the Evidences of Christianity.<sup>50</sup>

Laws' inaugural address included his reflections upon the role of religion in higher education. He contended that it was an issue which could not be neglected: "In the work of education, in the State of Missouri as elsewhere, it is impossible to ignore the subject of religion. The only alternative left open to us is not that of having no policy but only that of shaping a policy respecting it."<sup>51</sup> His comments also suggested the extent to which the University of Missouri (like other institutions of higher learning throughout the nation) was subject to increased tension and strife between the traditionalists, who continued to envision the University as an institution properly furthering traditional Christian (Protestant) values, ethics and morals, and those who envisioned for it a more secular and modern role. Criticism of the University by both groups constituted what Laws described as "the double complaint made against our State University as, on the one hand, having in it too little religion; and, on the other, as having too much."

In response to the first complaint and its impact on the University, Laws pointed out:

Our case is not peculiar, nor is the imputation novel, especially in its first form which launches against the University of the State of Missouri the charge of incompetence as an educator because of being Godless and infidel. This cry has been and is even now effective in weakening public confidence, producing distrust and diverting patronage.<sup>52</sup>

In defense of the religious nature and character of the University, he argued that while by law "the university is not a religious but a secular institution," this "did not mean that it is either irreligious or anti-religious—destitute of any religious influence or antagonistic to all religion." Indeed, a pervasive Christian environment and presence was evidenced by the fact that

eminent men and some ministers of the different Christian churches are in its faculties of instruction; and a considerable portion of the students are Church members, nearly all the children of Christian parents .... [Moreover] the Bible ... sacred book of the Christians [is] an open book inside of the institution [and] ... the Corps of instructors and their pupils assemble daily ... to read a brief extract from the Christian's sacred book ... and to offer a brief prayer to the God it reveals.<sup>53</sup>

Finally, in reference to the problem of sectarian influences, Laws contended:

In our State Universities, religion does its legitimate work, not by the mandates of ecclesiastical bodies, but by the influence of individual religious men, who possess the proper scientific and literary qualifications to entitle them, on that account, to University appointments.<sup>54</sup>

Ironically, Laws failed to live up to this standard in his own hiring and appointment of faculty. Viles points out that early in his administration, Laws sought in making appointments to be "sure that all the leading Protestant Churches were represented on the faculty."<sup>55</sup> According to a faculty member, "President Laws ... admitted publicly that he settled the competition between the various Protestant denominations for representation on his faculty, by choosing his appointees in rotation. If he needed a chemist, he chose a chemist who was a Methodist, if it was the Methodist's turn. The Baptists had their chance for a place in the sun when the next vacancy occurred."<sup>56</sup>

Given his background and commitments, it was not surprising that Laws would be sympathetic to the various denominations and their concerns or that he would vigorously attempt to minimize tensions between them and the University.<sup>57</sup> Laws argued, in fact, that there was no real distinction between the University and the denominational schools. This conviction and its pedagogical implications led him to make the novel suggestion of a "confederation" of Missouri universities and denominational colleges on the model of the British university system: "Why should not our academic faculty of the University and the academic faculty of each of the denominational colleges throughout the State meet together on equal footing and effect a literary confederation?"—the products of such a system being "A William Jewell College graduate of the University of the State of Missouri; or a Westminster College graduate of the University of the State of Missouri. And so of the others .... This is precisely what has been done in the universities of England for ages."<sup>58</sup>

Notwithstanding the British example, there was apparently little enthusiasm for or serious consideration of Laws' impractical and in all probability illegal proposal.<sup>59</sup> His proposal nevertheless serves as testimony to the troubling predicament posed by denominational schools which continued to successfully recruit students and siphon off support deemed essential to the continuance and expansion of the generally under-funded state universities.<sup>60</sup> It was perhaps with an eye to co-opting this competition that in 1880 the Curators of the University of Missouri passed a resolution admitting and offering free tuition to ministers and any young man in the state preparing for the ministry.<sup>61</sup>

The remainder of Laws' thirteen-year administration was marked not only by increased efforts at cooperation with the Protestant denominations and their schools but also by an increased religious pluralism and ecumenicity. This was manifested in the hiring of Alexander Meyrowitz ("a Hebrew, oriental and linguistic scholar") as Professor of Hebrew Language and Semantic literature, and the hosting by the University of an impressive array of distinguished Protestant and non-Protestant religious leaders. Among them were Reverend T. D. Talmage, Bishop Ryan of the St. Louis Catholic Diocese, and Dr. S. H. Sonneschein, a distinguished St. Louis Rabbi.<sup>62</sup> There were limits, however, to the University's ecumenical hospitality. One example is the fervor which occurred in the early Spring of 1878 as a result of a rumor that Col. Robert G. Ingersoll, the nation's most famous agnostic, had been invited to campus by the student literary societies.<sup>63</sup>

Despite Laws' strenuous and sincere efforts to maintain, promote and defend a traditional Christian presence and identity at the University, his administration was unable to cope successfully with the long-standing and increasingly complicated challenge which the religious issue, in its various manifestations, posed to both the University and the wider community. Moreover, his pedagogical and theological commitments increasingly conflicted with the new trends, currents and social forces which were reshaping both the religious and pedagogical arenas during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Among the most controversial and influential of these new currents was the Darwinian thesis, and neither Laws nor his faculty were able to isolate University of Missouri students from the new scientific, intellectual, and theological developments which it helped foster. Hence in debates, oratorical contests and essays on topics such as "Science and Revelation," "Faith and Doubt," "Creation Finished Yet Renewed," "Ingersoll and Ingersollism," students addressed these developments from various perspectives.<sup>64</sup>

Faculty response to what was deemed the most pernicious of the new currents—the Darwinian theory—was highlighted by two public lectures presented during the 1878–1879 academic year. Both lectures, which were delivered in the University's chapel, explicitly rejected the Darwinian thesis. The most comprehensive rejection of Darwinism and its religious, pedagogical and social implications came in the course of a lecture by Dr. George Swallow, Professor of Agriculture and Natural History and Dean of the Agricultural Faculty. Swallow's lecture, entitled "Evolution and Creation," vigorously defended the "Mosaic Theory of Creation" from both a scientific and theological posture. He contended that

the Mosaic Theory is the only one yet proposed, able to solve the problem of the origin of living beings.

The Supreme Being of this Theory has the power, the wisdom and benevolence to give the life and the superior laws of organic beings. And there are no facts, no science, which militate against this Theory of Creation, though promulgated 3,000 years before the rise of modern science.

The options posed to both the academic and wider community by the competing theories of creation were starkly presented in Swallow's conclusion:

Shall we then give up this Creation of Moses, which thus elevates and unites our destinies with the infinite, for this Evolution of Darwin, that links us to the worm, gives us a sonship in the monkey and binds us to the beasts that perish?

As a Christian student of science, I protest. In the name of all the splendid achievements and utilities of science, in the name of all the grandeur of moral truth, and all the sublime hopes of immortality, I am compelled to protest against such a sale of man's birth-right.<sup>65</sup>

Swallow's conclusion was supported by the more scripturally rooted defense of scientific and theological orthodoxy by Professor A. Meyrowitz. His lecture, entitled "The Mosaic Cosmogony," thoroughly affirmed the authority and accuracy of Scripture:

When the order of the Mosaic Cosmogony will be compared with the geological strata of the globe ... it will be found, that the order described by Moses ... agrees most accurately with it. And is not this one of the grandest proofs, that this book called the Bible is of none else but Him who declares at the beginning what will happen at the end of time, the only true wise God to whom be all glory and majesty.<sup>66</sup>

Laws, too, took up the cudgels against the "assailants" of Christian orthodoxy in his Baccalaureate sermon of 1886. Taking as his text "prove all things, hold fast to that which is good," he delivered what has been described as "a clear and conclusive refutation of the assaults which have been made ... by atheists and [their] sympathizers on the Christian religion." Among the "assailants" prominently referred to in his sermon were Robert Ingersoll and the British proponent of Social Darwinism, Herbert Spencer.<sup>67</sup> It appears that Laws and his administration epitomized the best and worst of the old vision and paradigm of the preacher/president presiding over a "seminary of learning" which emphasized piety and pedagogy. And as was the case with most of his predecessors, the convergence of both religion and politics eventually undermined his administration. It can be argued that by the end of the 1880s his thirteen-year administration had simply outlived its era. Consequently, Laws was found increasingly unsuited by temperament, training and theology to lead the University in addressing and responding to the new demands of the modern era.<sup>68</sup> As he became increasingly unpopular with students, faculty and legislators, tensions became so acute that the Committee on Appropriations of the 35th General Assembly declined to recommend funds for the University.<sup>69</sup> Finally, in 1889 the embattled Laws resigned. It is of significance to note that in 1892 he accepted an offer to join the faculty of Columbia Theological Seminary in Columbia, South Carolina. There he served as professor of Christian Apologetics for a number of years.<sup>70</sup> Like Shannon, Laws too may have been better suited

to a seminary or denominational college environment than that of a state university during this era of increasing tension, conflict and change.

### *Jesse's Administration*

The resignation of Laws set the stage for what would prove to be one of the most significant eras in the history of the University of Missouri. For almost two years a search committee labored to find someone who could successfully navigate the religious and political shoals which had proved so traumatic for Laws and his predecessors. Finally, in Richard H. Jesse it found a scholar and administrator enabled by temperament, theology and training to chart a new course for the University and usher it into the modern era. Under Jesse's imaginative leadership from 1891 to 1908, it evolved from a small provincial institution into a "modern university" of national stature.<sup>71</sup> Born in Lancaster, Virginia, in 1853, Jesse was educated at Hanover Academy and the University of Virginia. In 1878 he was called to the University of Louisiana (later Tulane University) where he served as Dean and Professor of Latin. He was serving as Professor of Latin at Tulane when his name was submitted to the search committee of the University of Missouri.<sup>72</sup>

Though only in his mid-thirties, Jesse had already proven his administrative and political skills by the leadership he provided in the transformation of the University of Louisiana into Tulane University.<sup>73</sup> His candidacy was further strengthened by a sabbatical trip to Europe in 1890. The trip, which included stops in Germany, helped familiarize Jesse with the new pedagogical currents, theories and developments emanating from Europe during this era. It placed him among the growing number of American scholars and administrators influenced firsthand by the European, and especially Germanic, pedagogical and theological developments—developments which were among the major currents contouring and fostering transition in both American religion and higher education during this era.<sup>74</sup>

Upon his return from Europe, Jesse accepted the presidency of the University of Missouri. His acceptance of the position was hailed by members of the faculty as auspicious—inaugurating a new "epoch in the history of the University of the State of Missouri." It was noted that to the "laborious task" before him Jesse brought "learning and experience, the energies of a young ripened manhood, a prudent and cautious temper, a keen knowledge of men, a mind sympathetic with our people and their interests, a mental vision comprehensive and minute, a capacity to plan and invent, and above all, the active genius of common sense."<sup>75</sup> Jesse would need and draw upon all of these assets in the course of his trying tenure as the eighth president of the University of Missouri.

One of the factors which made Jesse's tenure so trying was the religious issue—the roles which religion and religious concerns were to play in a modern, pluralistic, and by law nonsectarian public institution of higher education, located in a state where religious institutions were especially powerful and influential. Jesse's task was further exacerbated by the divisive impact which the new intellectual, academic and scientific currents were having within the pedagogical and religious arenas, as well as by new legal interpretations which were redefining the parameters of religious freedom and the relationship between church and state.<sup>76</sup> All challenged the traditional role which religion had heretofore played in public higher education.

Although from a devout and orthodox Baptist household, Jesse, like a number of his generation, experienced frustration and discomfort with the traditional assumptions and presuppositions of evangelical orthodoxy. While still a youth, this religious uncertainty led him some distance from the path of orthodoxy and resulted in his alienation and resignation from the church. His biographer noted that for more than 35 years thereafter, Jesse was unsure in his beliefs.<sup>77</sup> Eventually reconciled with his Baptist heritage, Jesse styled himself an "open communion Baptist" and attended Columbia's First Baptist Church while Mrs. Jesse and their children worshipped in the local Presbyterian church.<sup>78</sup>

Jesse's mature religious and theological orientation is a key to understanding the man and his administration. His actions and writings, especially a series of unpublished theological reflections entitled, "Creation as Told by Genesis," "On Finding God" and "Jesus of the Gospels," reflect the influence of a moderate form of theological liberalism. Jesse's biographer concurs in this theological assessment, noting that Jesse "held fast to the essentials of Christian belief but was rather liberal in their interpretation."<sup>79</sup> It was a theological posture decisively shaped by the new currents of the era and generally supportive of the transitions which these currents were fostering in the realm of higher education. As such, it enabled Jesse to creatively mediate much of the controversy which the new intellectual, academic and scientific developments associated with modernity evoked within the academic and religious community.

Although Jesse early confessed that he felt towards the presidency of the University of Missouri as a "clergyman should feel towards a bishopric," it is evident that he envisioned his administration as making a decisive break with the old model of clerical leadership and confessional pedagogy.<sup>80</sup> The outline of his bold and ambitious agenda was presented during an inaugural address which was hailed as "the gospel of progress."<sup>81</sup> Pointing to the example of progressive institutions such as Johns Hopkins, Oxford, and the University of Virginia, he insisted, "The old idea that universities train men only for law, medicine, and theology is gone from our land. Under modern interpretation they must dispense high instruction in every field."<sup>82</sup> Consequently, he called for expansion of the University's graduate and professional schools. Similarly, the undergraduate curriculum was to be updated and expanded by the addition of new academic disciplines such as sociology, and the faculty was encouraged to incorporate the new teaching and research methods and offer the "best instruction in the



fundamental sciences of physics, chemistry and biology.” And finally, to facilitate this new emphasis, Jesse called for the development of “a library to meet the demands of modern investigation.”<sup>83</sup>

In this inaugural address, Jesse also dealt forthrightly with the issue of religion and its role, status and influence on the University campus. Although for him “there was no antagonism between science and religion,” he was nevertheless aware that his emphasis on modern science and scholarship would elicit concern from those who feared that it would encourage the rise of infidelity at the University.<sup>84</sup> Hence he affirmed that while

Some stand in holy fear of science, as tending towards infidelity ... [but] the word of God cannot be at variance with his works when both are understood aright. Let us welcome science, therefore, and fear it not. It has done inestimable service to pedagogics by introducing the laboratory method of teaching.

Analogous methods, suggested thereby, have come to every department of scholastic work.<sup>85</sup>

As his comments indicate, Jesse was well aware that his position on the relationship between religion and science contrasted significantly with his predecessors’ affirmation of the primacy of “Divine Revelation” and as such marked a major milestone in the maturation and modernization of the University.<sup>86</sup>

In another decided break with tradition, Jesse put the denominations on notice that sectarianism and partisan politics would have no place at the University during his administration. Reflecting the changing demographics of a student body now larger and more pluralistic in its religious affiliations, as well as the boundaries of his own ecumenicity, he stated:

In a state university, where the students represent many varieties of religious and political belief, it is but right that the officers and professors, in their daily association with them, should abstain wholly from partisan and sectarian activity. I do not believe that any one will ever have just cause to complain of me in this respect. Our aim must be to make good and intelligent citizens for Missouri, whatever the party; good Christians whatever the Church. The institution must be patriotic, but non-partisan—Christian, but non-sectarian.<sup>87</sup>

In reference to the long-running and increasingly controversial issue of rivalry between the University and the State’s denominational colleges, Jesse expressed hope that there could be arranged “a *modus vivendi*, at least, if nothing more” between them and the University. He added,

In the competition that must exist in academical studies, we, for our part, must not employ methods of detraction; and they, in turn, will no doubt show their Christian spirit by avoiding the same .... There should be no rivalry between them and us that is not courteous, generous, and scholarly.<sup>88</sup>

Jesse also proposed to make a decisive break with the past on the sensitive issue of faculty hiring. He served public notice that in his administration, unlike that of Laws, denominational affiliation would no longer be considered: “In the employment of professors, pre-eminent qualification should be the only basis of selection. No principle of internal management is of greater importance than this. To waver in following it is to court failure.”<sup>89</sup> Indeed, Jesse’s adherence to this principle, coupled with his aggressive recruitment efforts, resulted in the University’s hiring some of the best young scholars in the nation over the course of his administration.<sup>90</sup>

Despite his public rejection of a number of traditional influences of religion at the University, Jesse was nevertheless convinced that both religion and religious institutions had a proper place and role to play in advancing both intellectual and spiritual growth at the University. Citing the example of the University of Michigan, he called on the denominations to supplement student housing and the library collections on campus, adding, “If the denominations wish to exercise supervision over their representatives here, the way is open and free to all alike. Rectors of churches in Columbia and at Rolla have ample opportunity to do pastoral work in the University—provided, of course, they do not aim unduly at making proselytes.”<sup>91</sup>

In his efforts to reshape the University into a modern institution and redefine the role of religion on campus, Jesse received support from some surprising quarters. On January 9, 1893, former students and graduates of the University then attending Harvard met and organized the Harvard University Chapter of the Missouri State University Alumni Association.<sup>92</sup> The members proceeded to pass a set of resolutions which called for a thorough modernization of the University. The preamble of their document (which remains contemporary in many respects) read:

It is the opinion of the Harvard University Chapter of the Missouri State University Alumni Association that the purpose of the university is to furnish facilities for the broadest and most liberal modern culture, and to foster and encourage the spirit of original research. That purpose can be secured only when there is the freest choice of electives consistent with thorough scholarship; when the officers of instruction, by recognized ability ... command the full respect and confidence of the student; and when the best of modern equipment is furnished in libraries and laboratories. Thus, we, the members of the Harvard University Chapter of the Missouri State University Alumni Association, desiring to promote the interest of our alma mater, and to assist in aligning her with the leading American universities, submit the following resolutions.<sup>93</sup>

Their first resolution called for a more generous appropriation to the University by the state legislature: “We join in urging upon the legislature of Missouri the grant of a generous appropriation to the state university, to the ends (a) that the board of curators may retain in the faculty the ablest instructors, and secure yet others; which can be done only by offering salaries

proportioned to the value and high standard of the service rendered." Additional resolutions called for the adoption of a broader curriculum offering "a more liberal scheme of elective work," the establishment of a graduate department, and support for the efforts made by Jesse to encourage and facilitate advanced study by the faculty at leading institutions at home and abroad.

The authors of this manifesto of modernization also felt compelled to comment on the role of religion at the University. After acknowledging the positive contributions made by the University's religious organizations, they called upon the legislature to appropriate funds for what in essence would have been an ecumenical center. Yet they also included a resolution which rejected mandatory chapel attendance as being inconsistent with the goals of modern higher education. Their resolution insisted that

chapel attendance should be regarded as a privilege rather than an obligation, and as such should be optional. The day for fining a man for non-attendance upon Divine service has passed; even the Puritans who practiced the custom have abolished it. There can hardly be justification for the continuance of a practice so un-universitylike and out of harmony with the progressive spirit of the age.<sup>94</sup>

At the University of Missouri, chapel services, usually presided over by the President, had been a staple of university life since the first Lathrop administration. However, it was not until the administration of Daniel Read that the Curators passed a resolution making chapel attendance mandatory for both students and faculty. This requirement was carried over into Jesse's administration. Thus the University's annual catalogue of 1891-1892 stipulated that "Religious exercises are held every morning from 8:45 to 9 O'clock in the chapel. They consist of readings from the Old and New Testaments, a brief prayer, and a song by the choir. All Students and Professors are required to attend these exercises."<sup>95</sup>

During the final decade of the nineteenth century, mandatory chapel became increasingly unpopular with students and faculty throughout the nation who viewed it as archaic, counterproductive and illegal. And as a growing number of legal challenges citing religious freedom were made to the practice, it became a major battleground in the struggle between the forces of traditionalism and modernism on the university campus.<sup>96</sup>

The opening salvo of this controversy at the University of Missouri preceded Jesse's hiring. It occurred in February 1890 when members of the senior law class submitted a petition requesting that they be excused from chapel services. Apparently no action was taken on this petition, which was subsequently forwarded to the Board of Curators by the faculty of the Law School.<sup>97</sup> However, by 1893 efforts to end mandatory chapel attendance had grown into a campus-wide movement involving a majority of the student body. In January of that year a mass student meeting was held. At this meeting a series of resolutions in opposition to mandatory chapel attendance were drawn up, adopted and subsequently presented to the Board of Curators. These resolutions reflected not only a sensitivity to the practical problems attendant upon mandatory chapel service in an increasingly pluralistic state university, but also an awareness of the legal precedents established at other institutions throughout the nation.<sup>98</sup> Three months later the faculty, evidencing its changing role in the modern university, joined in the petition campaign with submission of the following resolution to the Board of Curators which read: "It is the sense of this faculty that the interests of this university would be advanced by making attendance upon chapel voluntary."<sup>99</sup>

Although continuing to officiate at mandatory chapel services as required by the University's bylaws, Jesse joined in the campaign to end the practice. Proceeding with caution, he requested that the University's legal counsel prepare a brief detailing the "legal aspects of the rule now prevailing in the University which exacts compulsory attendance at chapel exercises." In May 1893 counsel submitted an extensive report which rehearsed both the history and legal aspects of compulsory chapel attendance and concluded that compulsory attendance as practiced at the University was suspect upon both legal and practical grounds. The final paragraph of the report (quoting Judge Cooley, "one of our most eminent living jurists") read:

Indeed as all real worship must essentially and necessarily consist in the free-will offering or adoration and gratitude by the Creature to the Creator; human laws are obviously inadequate to incite or compel those internal and voluntary emotions, which shall induce it, and human penalties at most could only enforce the observance of idle ceremonies, which when unwillingly performed are alike valueless to the participants and devoid of all the elements of true worship.<sup>100</sup>

Upon this counsel Jesse, who later claimed to have run a gauntlet of opposition, went before the Curators and requested that compulsory service be ended.<sup>101</sup> Subsequently in 1893, "On motion of Mr. Mitchell, the by-law requiring attendance upon chapel exercises was repealed and said attendance made voluntary."<sup>102</sup>

Despite resolution of the controversy over mandatory chapel attendance, the multifaceted religious issue posed problems for Jesse and his administration in other areas of university life. For example, the displacement of the traditional religious-oriented courses in the curriculum presented Jesse with the religious problematic in different garb. In 1891 a YMCA-sponsored student petition requested that the University offer elective credit-bearing courses in Bible study. Their petition is instructive and reads in part:

Bible study finds no place in our curriculum, yet properly studied, it cultivates painstaking, accurate scholarship; a play of all the intellectual faculties, and in it also may be found true philosophy and social science. Bible study affords as good a field for mental development, as any elective work that may be

offered. Furthermore we feel sure that such work would open the way more efficiently for devotional work, and thereby materially elevate the moral tone of the students .... There are many students who would be glad to take Bible study as elective work, if it could be counted in their courses of study. In fact they are very anxious for it. We therefore, in view of these facts, respectfully petition your honorable Body to place Bible study among the electives of the university courses.

It concluded with the observation that "Amherst and Yale have elective courses and find a great existing popularity for them."<sup>103</sup> The direct response of Jesse and the Curators to the petition is unreported, however, credit-bearing courses in biblical studies would not be available to University students until the development of the Bible School at the end of the century.<sup>104</sup>

Even the increasing popularity of intervarsity athletics presented Jesse with the problem of redefining the role and status of religion on campus. Controversy was evoked by an effort to adopt a five-day schedule at the University. The need to facilitate intervarsity travel and student attendance led Clark W. Hetherington, Professor of Physical Culture, Director of the Gymnasium and unofficial Athletic Director, to try to ensure that Saturday "game day" would not be replaced by a Monday off-day. On the other hand, a group of the city's ministers charged that the scheduling of classes on Monday would foster infidelity by inducing students to use Sunday primarily as a day of class preparation rather than traditional Sabbath observance. As this controversy fomented, Jesse exclaimed, "Here it is! Religion on one side and athletics on the other."<sup>105</sup>

More embarrassing for Jesse was the controversy begun in December 1895 when members of the senior law class, like the student literary society almost two decades earlier, voted to invite Robert G. Ingersoll to deliver an address.<sup>106</sup> Despite the increased academic and religious tolerance espoused by Jesse's young administration, the resulting storm of protest on campus, in the community, and the state press resulted once again in abandonment of a proposed invitation to the nation's most "distinguished agnostic."<sup>107</sup>

Despite such controversies, Jesse remained convinced that religion, divorced from a narrow sectarianism and compulsion, had a proper and indeed vital role to play on the modern university campus. A considerable portion of his energies, as President of the University of Missouri and a nationally recognized leader in higher education, was dedicated to advancing this conviction. In fact, Jesse's active participation in a number of national education organizations, including the American Education Association and the National Association of State Universities (of which he was elected President in 1905) afforded him national platforms and forums from which to creatively address the issue of religion and higher education.<sup>108</sup>

In a 1901 address entitled, "The Function of the State University," Jesse was explicit in arguing that an institution could be "every inch a university" and still foster both an academic and a spiritual awareness of religion. He lamented that "state universities have not yet realized their opportunity for developing in students a life that is religious and yet not sectarian." Too often he noted, "Freedom from denominationalism is apt to be construed as license to subordinate unduly religion in education."

Convinced of the necessity and legitimacy of a nonsectarian and nonconfessional approach to religion, Jesse anticipated the debate which would result in the eventual development of university-based religious studies departments:

No good reason appears why the universities should not each maintain one professor, at least, to lecture upon sacred literature, natural religion, and practical morals, and to serve as chaplain of the students. If, unfortunately, the law or constitution forbids such teaching at public expense, an appeal should be made for an endowment by private benefactors.

Drawing upon the German pedagogical model and its academic ethos, he recommended the establishment of graduate departments of theology in state institutions:

[W]hy should not a large state university maintain a department of theology, without which it is not complete and which does not belong necessarily to any denomination. In Germany, in spite of an established church, theology is non-sectarian. Men of all creeds go there for training. Why should not our American state universities show that ethics, religion and even theology of the highest and best type may be divorced entirely from denominationalism.<sup>109</sup>

The dilemma of maintaining a vital and vigorous religious presence in the increasingly secular environment of the modern university also brought forth a major paper by Jesse before the Religious Education Association in 1904. In this paper, entitled "The Most Effective Method of Chapel Worship," Jesse suggested methods by which institutions of higher education could provide an effective noncompulsory chapel service. In order to make the service both appealing and beneficial, he recommended that it include "a brief talk, not always strictly religious, but ministering always to higher living, personal, social and civic." In addition to being relevant, he insisted that the service be respectful of the increasing religious pluralism on the University campus. However, the limitations of Jesse's ecumenical sensitivity were apparent in his warning that

Nothing that is objectionable to any reasonable Christian should ever appear in a chapel exercise. Devout Catholics and Protestants should be able to participate heartily. Nor should there be anything to offend the feelings of a reasonable Jew, but I take it that these exercises will be Christian in all the institutions of this

country that do not belong to the Jews. In my own university, where attendance is voluntary and the exercises are Christian, a good percentage of Jews attend regularly.

This address also provided Jesse with the opportunity to publicly reflect upon the substantially changed role and responsibility of the university president and faculty. He pointed out that

In early times it was the business of the president to watch personally over the lives of his students. Nobly this service was rendered by men like Wayland and Hopkins, and nobly it is rendered today by many presidents of small colleges. But as colleges and universities grow, it becomes first difficult, and then impossible, for a president to have much personal influence over his students. In our largest universities, he does not know, perhaps, one student in twenty, and it sometime taxes him to remember the names and faces of all the members of his teaching staff. He can still do much for his students but nearly all of it must be done vicariously. In most cases, he can no more look personally after their lives than he can fly.

The truth is that in most of our larger institutions of learning, presidents and deans and professors are not now generally chosen for ability as spiritual leaders, nor does it appear how they can be .... I know of no deans or presidents that are not sympathetic towards religious life, but if great power in spiritual leadership were suddenly demanded of them all, many high offices in our larger educational institutions might become vacant.

A similar situation existed among faculty who "when free from constraint ... rarely show much zeal in spiritual things. Consecrated to well beloved studies, they are inclined to serve God and their fellowmen by scholastic teachings, by erudite writings, and by blameless lives."

Since it was no longer realistic to expect the president or faculty to perform the traditional roles of spiritual leader and moral guardian, Jesse suggested that universities establish a "Dean of Morals and Manners." His role would be to preside over chapel services and coordinate efforts to meet the religious and spiritual needs of students without proselytizing. Hence Jesse insisted that

The proposed Dean of Manners and Morals must be broad enough to stimulate the Jewish Club, the Catholic Club and the YMCA. Personally he might desire that every Jew should become a Christian but as an officer of a university he would have no right to tamper with anybody's creed.

Jesse was also insistent that this new Dean and spiritual leader not be a preacher. He explained:

The training of the clergy is liable to disqualify a man in a measure for this service. Preaching is necessarily emphasized in the training of a preacher. The spiritual leader of a college should have power to hold his tongue .... [Moreover] in the state universities there would be danger of bombardment by the denominations if a minister of any denomination were put in charge of this work. For my own university, I would look for a layman that by birthright had a good head, a good heart and a good stomach.... His scholarship should be amply sufficient to maintain his respectability on the campus, but his interest would be in men rather than in scholarly things.... Above all, he must be a man of deep personal piety, but broadly catholic.<sup>110</sup>

While insistent that the proposed Dean of Morals and Manners not be a man of the cloth, Jesse did not exhibit any animosity toward ministers. In fact, he made a point of cultivating the support and friendship of many of the more progressive ministers in the nation and regularly invited the "best" ministers in the state to lecture and preside over voluntary chapel services at the University.<sup>111</sup>

Another way in which Jesse sought to encourage and maintain an appropriate religious presence on the University campus was by supporting the activities of the YMCA and YWCA. Founded in Britain in the midnineteenth century, the "Y movement" rapidly spread to American colleges and universities where it became one of the more effective and efficient means of cultivating a vigorous religious presence on campus.<sup>112</sup> At the University of Missouri the "Y movement" became extremely popular in the 1890s and actively sought to fill the void left on campus by the University's official retreat from traditional religious activities and offerings. For example, the lack of courses in biblical studies induced the campus Y to provide an unaccredited Sunday afternoon Bible study course.<sup>113</sup> Not surprisingly, the "Y movement" came to play an important role in Jesse's efforts to redefine the role and status of religion at the University. His enthusiasm for the movement occasionally led him perilously close to overstepping the legal boundaries separating church and state, as in 1901 when he sought legislative support for the construction of an edifice to house its many activities.<sup>114</sup>

One of the most creative and controversial ways in which Jesse attempted to foster an acceptable and legal religious presence in the campus environment was to invite denominations to build their own Bible colleges in the vicinity of the University. It was an idea originally proposed by Thomas Jefferson while President of the University of Virginia as a compromise which would maintain the nonsectarian character of the institution and defuse tensions between it and the denominations by providing religious leaders with an opportunity to sustain contact and influence with their youth in attendance at the University.<sup>115</sup> Jesse revived the Bible college concept as a practical solution to a number of the religious-related legal and academic issues which had plagued his administration and that of his predecessors. Most notably, it appeared to afford the University the opportunity to develop a more positive relationship with the denominations and defuse the persistent charges that it was a "godless institution."



Although all the major denominations were invited by Jesse and the Curators to take advantage of this arrangement, only the Disciples of Christ initially availed themselves of the University's invitation. Their reasons for doing so are instructive. They include the conviction that it would be impossible for the denomination to raise sufficient funds to compete successfully with the State in general education and that "the interests of the Christian youth studying in the university demanded an effort upon the part of the church for their moral and spiritual welfare." As summarized by a Church spokesman:

We must either insist on our young men and women attending an institution of our own with inferior facilities, or else we must do what we are proposing to do, and what the university of the State invites us to do—avail ourselves of the advantages offered by our university and provide for biblical, ethical and religious teaching in a special institution devoted to such disciplines.<sup>116</sup>

At services held January 21, 1896, marking the inauguration of the Bible College of Missouri, Jesse conveyed the University's welcome and endorsement of the new institution. He also recounted the history of the Bible college movement, linking it specifically to Jefferson's efforts at the University of Virginia:

[T]he policy of founding Bible colleges in the vicinity of universities is not new or untried. It was advocated ably and earnestly some seventy-five years ago by Thomas Jefferson. When he was planning for the foundation of the University of Virginia he cordially invited every denomination ... to establish in the neighborhood of his beloved institution just such a Bible school as this. Strange to say no denomination in Virginia has yet adopted his suggestion. But wise thought does not fall to the ground fruitless. Rejected in Virginia, Mr. Jefferson's idea has been adopted in other parts of the world, and here tonight, three quarters of a century afterward, on the soils that he himself added to the American Union, and in sight of the monument that first marked his grave, we find this idea bringing fruit.

In light of the long history of tension and competition between the University and the denominational schools, Jesse clearly envisioned this as a fortuitous development for higher education in Missouri.

Our brethren of the Church of the Disciples decline to divert their resources into a college of liberal arts duplicating in feeble form that which the state is furnishing in better form in the University; instead they will concentrate all their energy and available resources upon the maintenance here of a School of the Prophets.

He concluded with an invitation to other denominations to follow the example of the Disciples. "All," he added, "shall have the same welcome."<sup>117</sup> And as if to prove the sincerity of his invitation, Jesse labored diligently though without success throughout the remainder of his administration to get other denominations to establish Bible colleges in conjunction with the University.<sup>118</sup>

Meanwhile the Bible College itself was clear in its goal of "organizing Christian influences in permanent association with the university." Its 1903 bulletin declared:

The Bible College has a double function. In addition to its work in preparing men for the ministry and for missions, it reaches many students ... with biblical work .... No semester passes in which students of the various colleges are not enrolled in its lecture courses.<sup>119</sup>

Among the courses which students could take to supplement the regular university curriculum were "The Life of Jesus and Harmony of the Gospels," "Evidence of Christianity Based on a Study of the Character of Jesus," "Literature of the Bible," "Introduction to the Pauline Letters," "Principles of Interpretation," "Old Testament History," and "The Laws of Moses."<sup>120</sup>

Although Jesse publicly expressed no concern about the theological orientation of the Bible College and its staff, no doubt he was pleased to find that soon after its establishment, its curriculum and faculty reflected a theological shift which made it more compatible with his own theological posture.<sup>121</sup> Perhaps this helps to explain why he was so little concerned about the practical and legal aspects of the University's relationship with the college. In 1903 Jesse addressed a letter to William Jefferson Lhamon, the college's new dean, which expressed his sentiments about the arrangement between the two institutions:

Dear Mr. Lhamon: In my opinion there is no difficulty in adjusting the relation between a state university and a Bible college under the control of a denomination of Christians. So long as the officers of both institutions are reasonably wise the adjustment comes naturally and without effort. A Bible college offers courses of instruction leading to professional degrees and gives credit toward that degree for such courses as it wishes its students to take. The university, having no course in theology, does not give any credit to the work of the Bible school, but the students of the college, being citizens of the state, can take any work in the University they desire, subject, of course, to the requirements of the university. There should be no sort of difficulty and there will be none unless it is created by blunders on the part of the authorities of one or of both of the institutions.... Since its establishment the Bible college has worked with the university with perfect harmony and the best feeling.<sup>122</sup>

However, impetus for a closer and more formal relationship with the University came from Dean Lhamon. Heavily influenced by liberal theology and its scholarship, Lhamon differed with the Bible College's founding Dean, William Thomas Moore, on both theological and pedagogical matters. Whereas the more theologically conservative Moore emphasized the

Bible College's role in preparing ministers and missionaries, Lhamon desired to develop a broader academic and vocational agenda for the school.<sup>123</sup> Consequently, Lhamon sought a more cooperative academic arrangement with the University. It was an arrangement made feasible by the construction in 1904 of Lowry Hall, the new building housing the Bible College, across the street from the University. In that same year Lhamon sought Jesse's assistance in gaining university credits for courses given in the Bible College. His petition was granted by the Curators who approved university credit for courses such as "The Bible as Literature," "Old and New Testament History," "Hebrew Language and Literature," and "Comparative Religion."<sup>124</sup>

In commenting on this development, which marked a major step in the evolution of the University and the Bible College (prefiguring the latter's transition into the Missouri School of Religion in 1938 and eventually the University's establishment of the Department of Religious Studies in 1981), Lhamon concluded:

This was one of the most favorable steps forward in the history of the Bible College. This action by the university authorities was not only an open door to such students of the University as might desire courses in the Bible and in religion ... it set the seal of approval on the character of the work that was offered and given in the Bible College. It proclaimed the academic character of our work and in the eyes of thoughtful students it said plainly that religion was one of the great interests of human well-being, and that it had a rightful place amid the cultural interests of humanity in the foremost centers of its culture.<sup>125</sup>

It is ironic, given Jesse's considerable efforts to define a proper religious influence at the University of Missouri, that the final years of his administration were marred by religious and theological controversy. Throughout his presidency some segments of the religious community had remained critical of his attempts to modernize the University, especially insofar as these efforts were perceived as displacing the traditional role and status of Protestant orthodoxy on campus. In the opening years of the new century, they vigorously renewed charges that the University was a "Godless institution" and "a hotbed of infidelity." To these charges Jesse's administration, like that of his predecessors, remained especially vulnerable.<sup>126</sup>

Although initially disposed to "turn a deaf ear to the slanderers," Jesse eventually responded with a public relations campaign aimed primarily, though not exclusively, at the state's clergy. In a January 1904 "bulletin" entitled, "On Religious Life in the University," he forcefully contended that the "university was a stronghold of righteousness as well as intellectuality." Acknowledging the existence of the "dispute as to the religious condition of the State University" and the charges made against it, Jesse noted that these "adverse charges are made by men who have no personal knowledge of the university." If so, he argued, they would have been aware of the vibrant religious life on and in the vicinity of the campus. This vibrancy reflected in "reverent chapel exercises" held daily at the University, the "largest Bible Classes in Missouri ... formed chiefly of teachers and students at the University" and the active presence of the campus Y movement. The latter he described as "by far the largest college chapter in Missouri, and by far, the best in management, zeal and efficiency." His detailed catalogue of its activities included reference to a "popular core of public lectures, a work agency for needy students, and a large number of courses for Bible study in which the percentage of students enrolled is greater than that in most universities in America."<sup>127</sup>

The proximity of the Bible College and its religious offerings to students at the University also afforded Jesse ammunition with which to refute the charges of institutional infidelity. He was not hesitant to point out, "The Church of the Disciples has near our campus a Bible college which has some endowment. Students of the university who desire to do so attend lectures in this college."<sup>128</sup>

Jesse's response to the charge of infidelity at the University also reflected his knowledge of human nature, religion and the pedagogical enterprise. Although acknowledging the verity of occasional reports about "sons of pious parents" having "lost faith" at the University, Jesse pointed out that this was not an uncommon nor necessarily lamentable occurrence. No doubt with reference to his own youthful struggles with orthodoxy, he noted:

Nearly every well-educated man passes through a period of doubt as he goes from the faith of a child to the faith of the developed man. Few men of intellectual power and liberal education escape. This struggle comes generally during the college period .... It generally ends in the strong faith of the full-grown man.

It was unfortunate, he added, that "These honest doubts are sometimes mistaken for infidelity."<sup>129</sup>

Although unmentioned by Jesse in his response, the charges of infidelity directed at the University may have been directly related to developments at the Bible College. These included Lhamon's displacement of the more conservative Moore as Dean in 1902, the expansion of the faculty the following year to include Charles Sharpe (who like Lhamon was sympathetic to the liberal currents of religious scholarship) and the formalization of a closer relationship with the University.<sup>130</sup> All reflected a decisive shift in the founding theological and pedagogical orientation of the Bible College.

This shift evoked unfavorable reactions from more conservative elements among the Disciples. Smoldering conflict came to a head when Rev. G. A. Hoffman, hired in 1896-1897 as financial secretary of the Bible College, claimed theological irregularities at the school and refused to turn over promised endowment monies.<sup>131</sup> After unsuccessfully exhausting other means of redress, the Bible College filed suit against Hoffman in 1907.<sup>132</sup>

Hoffman's legal defense is significant because it firmly cast the controversy within the context of the modernist/fundamentalist debate which would soon rack religious and educational institutions throughout the nation. Although focused on the theological heterodoxy of Sharpe and Lhamon as reflected in their "acceptance of the so-called newer scholarship," it also rehearsed issues and claims of Scriptural authority which would become touchstones in the full-blown controversy between the forces of modernism and fundamentalism. Hoffman specifically alleged that the staff of the Bible College rejected the "Mosaic six-day account of creation," "deviated from the teaching of the founders of the Disciples," and failed to accept the Scriptures as the infallible word of God, written under His direct influence and the only rule of faith and practice. His most serious charges, however, were directed at Professor Sharpe who had studied at the University of Chicago. According to Hoffman, the University of Chicago was "an institution well known as a hotbed of infidelity and destructive criticism" and one which had already "been repudiated by the great brotherhood of the Baptist Church." Consequently, he alleged that "the mere fact" that the Bible College "employs a professor from Chicago University is in itself sufficient to show that plaintiff [Dean Lhamon] had changed the purpose and object for which it was incorporated, namely to prepare young men for the Christian ministry."<sup>133</sup> Finally, with reference to the Bible College's new relationship with the University, Hoffman alleged that it was no longer a real Bible college but rather had been "changed to a mere Bible chair of the University without a curriculum of Bible study and Bible College work."<sup>134</sup>

The trial concluded with the judge's discounting Hoffman's attacks on the faculty and courses at the Bible College, ruling that "the teaching of an institution cannot invalidate legal financial obligations to it."<sup>135</sup> Unfortunately for Jesse and the University of Missouri, Hoffman's attack on the Bible College had been publicized throughout the midwest by the media, which sensationalized the story as "a Bible College in some kind of association with the University of Missouri teaching infidelity."<sup>136</sup>

The extent to which this extended controversy proved to be a factor in Jesse's resignation in 1908 from the University of Missouri is uncertain. Clearly it was a source of frustration, anxiety and embarrassment to the already ailing and besieged patriarch of the University. In 1905 failing health, attributed to a "nervous disease," induced him to take an extended sabbatical trip to Europe. Any respite as a result of his almost year-long trip was brief, for his health rapidly deteriorated upon his return to partial duties at the University. Finally, in December 1907 Jesse, an old man at 54 and after 17 years as the heart and soul of the University of Missouri, tendered his resignation of the Presidency.<sup>137</sup> It was appropriate that the agency which facilitated his retirement was the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. The foundation provided retirement assistance to educators in unendowed nonsectarian institutions, and at the urging of Mr. Carnegie himself, bestowed upon Jesse an honor never before conferred upon a retiring president: an award of \$3,000 annually.<sup>138</sup>

Retirement ceremonies for Jesse included extensive rehearsals of his many contributions to the advancement of modern higher education in Missouri and throughout the nation.<sup>139</sup> Ironically, these tributes ignored Jesse's seminal contribution to the debate concerning religion and higher education: his uncompromising insistence that religion and religious studies, divorced from sectarian influence and compulsion, could and should have a place and role in the modern university. While standing fast between confessionalists and secularists, Jesse pointed out that the agenda of neither was appropriate on the modern university campus.

Even in retirement and amidst failing health, Jesse continued his national leadership on the issue of religion and higher education. In August 1911 John Bowman, President of the State University of Iowa, wrote to Jesse with a confession and request: "One of the most difficult things which I have at hand is the solution of the chapel problem. For help in this matter ... may I count upon having you and Mrs. Jesse for a few days early this autumn?"<sup>140</sup> Two months later Bowman again wrote to Jesse informing him that "We have just decided at the university to discontinue our regular weekly assemblies ... and begin a series of Sunday afternoon vesper services." In concluding with an invitation for Jesse to inaugurate the new service, Bowman added, "As you know any student body is genuinely interested in religious matters. It is only when definitions and lines are drawn that they are shy .... Any talk which you would give us on this occasion I am confident will have in it the kind of help we need."<sup>141</sup>

While limitations of vision and perspective are obvious, Jesse's positive contributions and legacy are illuminated by the number of religious studies departments which have been developed in state universities throughout the nation since the 1960s.<sup>142</sup> Included among them is the Department of Religious Studies, which was established at the University of Missouri in 1981. This development, almost a full century after Jesse's 1891 inauguration, represents the belated culmination of his efforts to forge the University of Missouri into a thoroughly modern and world-class academic institution.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Henry O. Servance, *Richard Henry Jesse: President of the University of Missouri, 1891–1902* (Columbia, MO: The author, 1937), preface; p. 48.
- <sup>2</sup> Jesse to the Executive Board of the University of Missouri, Volume II, 1894, p. 6. Papers of Richard H. Jesse, Joint Collection University of Missouri, Western Historical Manuscript Collection—Columbia State Historical Society of Missouri Manuscripts.
- <sup>3</sup> Mark A. Noll, "Christianity and American Higher Education," *Christianity in America* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1983), p. 389.
- <sup>4</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>5</sup> William F. Switzler, *History of the University of Missouri*, unpublished manuscript (1904), University of Missouri Archives, uw: 1/6/1/, Box 3, p. 15.
- <sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 13.
- <sup>7</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 74; John C. Crighton, *A History of Columbia and Boone County* (Columbia, MO: Computer Color-Graphics, 1987), p. 19.
- <sup>9</sup> James and Vera Olson, *The University of Missouri: An Illustrated History* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1988), p. 7.
- <sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 4.
- <sup>11</sup> Switzler, *History*, pp. 1362–1363.
- <sup>12</sup> William C. Ringenberg, *The Christian College, A History of Protestant Higher Education in America* (Grand Rapids: Christian University Press, 1984), pp. 80–81.
- <sup>13</sup> Switzler, *History*, pp. 216, 209, 222–225.
- <sup>14</sup> Ringenberg, *College*, p. 56; Jonas Viles, *The University of Missouri: A Centennial History* (Columbia: University of Missouri, 1939), p. 36.
- <sup>15</sup> Ringenberg, *College*, p. 18; Viles, *Centennial History*, p. 32.
- <sup>16</sup> Viles, *Centennial History*, pp. 46, 49; *Missouri Statesman*, February 28, 1846.
- <sup>17</sup> Lathrop subsequently served as the first Chancellor of the University of Wisconsin and President of the University of Indiana before returning to the University of Missouri as Professor and President (1865–1866); Viles, *Centennial History*, pp. 48, 50, 54; Switzler, *History*, pp. 133–134.
- <sup>18</sup> Address delivered in the Chapel of the University of the State of Missouri on Occasion of the Dedication of the Edifice, by John Lathrop, A.M., President of the University, July 4, 1843 (Columbia, MO: Switzler and Williams, 1843), pp. 12–13.
- <sup>19</sup> Ringenberg, *College*, p. 82.
- <sup>20</sup> Viles, *Centennial History*, p. 53; Switzler, *History*, pp. 165–166.
- <sup>21</sup> Viles, *Centennial History*, p. 53; Switzler, *History*, p. 125.
- <sup>22</sup> Viles, *Centennial History*, p. 58.
- <sup>23</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>24</sup> Viles, *Centennial History*, pp. 53, 63; Switzler, *History*, pp. 164–165.
- <sup>25</sup> Viles, *Centennial History*, p. 54.
- <sup>26</sup> Viles, *Centennial History*, p. 77; Switzler, *History*, p. 135.
- <sup>27</sup> Viles, *Centennial History*, pp. 60, 52–53; Switzler, *History*, pp. 155–156, 1374–1377.
- <sup>28</sup> Frank F. Stephens, *A History of the University of Missouri* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1962), p. 119; Viles, *Centennial History*, p. 59.
- <sup>29</sup> Viles, *Centennial History*, p. 59.
- <sup>30</sup> Ibid., p. 61.
- <sup>31</sup> Stephens, *History*, p. 119.
- <sup>32</sup> Viles, *Centennial History*, pp. 59–60.
- <sup>33</sup> Switzler, *History*, pp. 171, 168.
- <sup>34</sup> Viles, *Centennial History*, pp. 81, 88, 96.
- <sup>35</sup> Olson, *University*, p. 11; Viles, *Centennial History*, p. 96; Switzler, *History*, p. 201.
- <sup>36</sup> *University of Missouri Installation Exercises. Address by J. W. Tucker, Esq., Member of the Board of Curators, and Response by Benjamin B. Minor, A.M., President of the University. Delivered in the Chapel, October 2* (Columbia, MO: William F. Switzler, 1860), pp. 11–12.
- <sup>37</sup> Ibid., p. 22.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., pp. 23–24. The Curators shared these expectations and in 1860 adopted a resolution which imposed upon the faculty the task of overseeing the moral and spiritual welfare of the students. Switzler, *History*, p. 193.

<sup>39</sup> Ringenberg, *College*, pp. 118–127; William R. Hutchinson, *The Modernist Impulse in American Protestantism* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1976).

<sup>40</sup> C. B. Rollins, *Addresses Delivered at the Inauguration of R. H. Jesse, LL.D., as President of the University of the State of Missouri, June 3, 1891* (Columbia, MO: Statesman Printing House, 1893), p. 11; Switzler, *History*, pp. 393–394.

<sup>41</sup> Viles, *Centennial History*, p. 139. University of Missouri Archives, Official Correspondence of the Board of Curators, Box 1, File 18; Switzler, *History*, p. 275.

<sup>42</sup> Viles, *Centennial History*, p. 139; Inaugural Address of Samuel S. Laws, July 5, 1876; pp. 74–75.

<sup>43</sup> Viles, *Centennial History*, p. 139.

<sup>44</sup> Stephens, *History*, p. 255.

<sup>45</sup> Switzler, *History*, pp. 433–435; 516–517.

<sup>46</sup> Viles, *Centennial History*, p. 173.

<sup>47</sup> Inaugural Address of Samuel Laws, p. 65.

<sup>48</sup> Viles, *Centennial History*, p. 176.

<sup>49</sup> Switzler, *History*, p. 495.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Inaugural Address of Samuel Laws, p. 62.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., p. 63.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., p. 71.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., p. 76.

<sup>55</sup> Viles, *Centennial History*, pp. 180–181.

<sup>56</sup> Winterton C. Curtis, “A Damned-Yankee Professor in Little Dixie, Abstract from the Autobiographical Notes of Winterton C. Curtis.” Reprinted from the *Columbia Missourian*, April 2–20, 1957, p. 44. University Archives, Curators Working Files and Correspondence, 6/40/1.

<sup>57</sup> Viles, *Centennial History*, p. 176.

<sup>58</sup> Samuel S. Laws, “The Relation of the Independent Colleges to the System of State Schools,” (nd/np), pp. 89–92; Switzler, *History*, p. 25.

<sup>59</sup> In its 1875 revision of the 1865 State Constitution, the Missouri legislature was explicit in rejecting state support for religious schools. Switzler, *History*, p. 25.

<sup>60</sup> Viles, *Centennial History*, p. 183.

<sup>61</sup> University of Missouri Archives, Official Correspondence of the Board of Curators, 1839–1920, uw: 1/4/1, Box 4, File 5A.

<sup>62</sup> Switzler, *History*, pp. 525, 528–529, 552, 802, 540–541, 617, 628.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., p. 559.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., pp. 752–753, 758.

<sup>65</sup> Dr. George Swallow, “Evolution and Creation,” *University of Missouri Public Lectures Delivered in the Chapel of the University of the State of Missouri, Columbia, Missouri, by Members of the Faculty, 1878–79, Course II, Volume I* (Columbia: Statesman Book and Job Print, 1879), pp. 89–92.

<sup>66</sup> Dr. Alexander Meyrowitz, “Mosaic Cosmogony,” *University of Missouri Public Lectures*, p. 180.

<sup>67</sup> Switzler, *History*, pp. 805–806.

<sup>68</sup> Martin E. Marty, *Modern American Religion: Volume I, The Irony of It All* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1986).

<sup>69</sup> Servance, *Jesse*, p. 21; Switzler, *History*, pp. 863, 886–889.

<sup>70</sup> Servance, *Jesse*, p. 245; Switzler, *History*, p. 892.

<sup>71</sup> Servance, *Jesse*, preface; Viles, *Centennial History*, p. 229; Switzler, *History*, p. 949.

<sup>72</sup> Stephens, *History*, p. 326.

<sup>73</sup> Servance, *Jesse*, p. 33.

<sup>74</sup> Ringenberg, *College*, p. 26.

<sup>75</sup> Address of Dr. J. S. Blackwell on the Inauguration of Richard H. Jesse, *Addresses Delivered at the Inauguration of R. H. Jesse, LL.D., as President of the University of the State of Missouri. Also an Address Before the Literary Societies by Chas. H. Jones, Editor, St. Louis Republic. June 3, 1891* (Columbia, MO: Statesman Printing House, 1893), p. 9.

<sup>76</sup> Ringenberg, *College*, pp. 115–134.

<sup>77</sup> Servance, *Jesse*, pp. 195–196.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., p. 195.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., p. 196.

<sup>80</sup> Jesse to Professor Edward Allen, April 24, 1890. University of Missouri Archives, Working Files and Correspondence of Board of Curators, uw: 1/4/1, Box 8, Folder 1A-1890.

<sup>81</sup> Servance, *Jesse*, pp. 48-49.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> Richard H. Jesse, "Inaugural Address," *Addresses Delivered at the Inauguration of R. H. Jesse*, pp. 36-39.

<sup>84</sup> Servance, *Jesse*, p. 196.

<sup>85</sup> Jesse, "Inaugural Address," p. 44.

<sup>86</sup> Benjamin B. Minor, "Inaugural Address," *University of Missouri, Installation Exercises*, p. 22.

<sup>87</sup> Jesse, "Inaugural Address," p. 44.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., p. 42.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., pp. 44-45.

<sup>90</sup> Richard H. Jesse, "Letter to the Board of Curators," 10 December, 1907, p. 4. University of Missouri Archives, uw: 1/4/1, Box 11, Folder 71B-1907.

<sup>91</sup> Jesse, "Inaugural Address," p. 44.

<sup>92</sup> Resolutions of Harvard University Chapter of the Missouri State University Alumni Association, 18 February, 1893. University of Missouri Archives, uw: 1/6/1, Box 3, Folder 1-1893.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

<sup>95</sup> *Annual Catalogue of the University of Missouri, 1891-1892*, p. 107.

<sup>96</sup> Donald E. Boles, *The Bible, Religion and the Public Schools* (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1961), p. 139.

<sup>97</sup> Petition of Senior Law Class, February, 1890. University of Missouri Archives, uw: 1/4/1, Box 8, Folder 1B-1890.

<sup>98</sup> Student Petition Against Compulsory Chapel Attendance, 1893. University of Missouri Archives, Curators Working Files and Minutes, uw: 1/1/2, Box 2, Folder 2-1893. Their document reads in part:

Whereas, the desirability of voluntary, rather than compulsory, chapel attendance has been demonstrated by a large majority of the leading State universities and other prominent and reputable educational institutions, notably the Universities of Michigan, Kansas, Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Nebraska, Iowa, Texas, Indiana, California, and Virginia, and among private institutions, Clark, Johns Hopkins, Harvard, ... Stanford ... and Cornell Universities ...

Whereas it is human nature to chafe under restraint, and experience has proven that the immoral tendencies of disorder and irreverence cannot be prevented in public worship, where rules of compulsory attendance [attain]; ...

Whereas, nearly all denominations are represented in the student corps, some recognizing the whole Bible as true, some rejecting the Messiah, and some rejecting the whole Bible, while others recognize the Old Testament only; ...

Whereas, the University is a State institution, deriving its support from the tax-payers, and, on this account, its funds—being public—cannot be dispersed for the support of any sect, creed, or denomination; ...

Whereas, it is a grave question of doubt, as demonstrated by the decisions of various other States, whether under the existing constitution any one can be compelled to attend any place of worship, and especially where a particular form of worship is practiced; ...

Whereas, such compulsory systems of worship seem manifestly foreign to the principles of religious freedom as enunciated in Sections 6 and 7 of Article II of the Constitution of the State of Missouri; ...

Whereas, compulsory worship is particularly distasteful to us; ...

Whereas, the legislature has given the students the right of respectful petition; therefore be it Resolved, That we, the majority of the students of the University of the State of Missouri, uninfluenced by any improper or personal considerations and animated solely by a desire for the ultimate good of the University, are of the opinion that attendance upon divine worship should be voluntary, and do, therefore, petition your honorable body to abolish the rule compelling attendance upon chapel exercises.

<sup>99</sup> J. F. Paxton, Secretary of the Faculty, 4 April 1893. University of Missouri Archives, uw: 1/4/1, Box 9, Folder 2a.

<sup>100</sup> "Report to R. H. Jesse on the Legality of Compulsory Chapel Attendance," 8 May 1893. University of Missouri Archives, uw: 1/4/1, Box 9, Folder 3A-1893.

<sup>101</sup> Switzler, *History*, p. 1020.

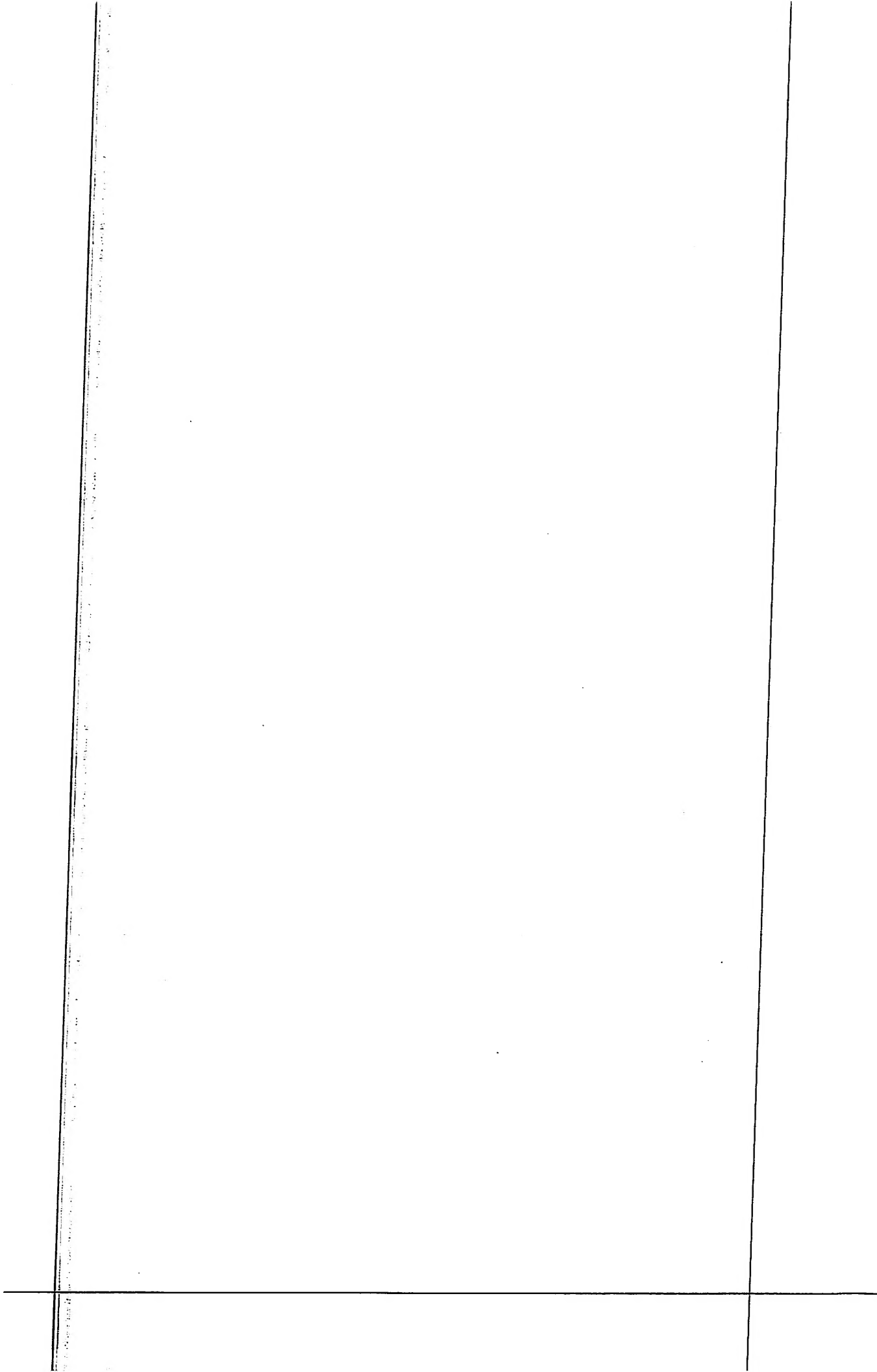
<sup>102</sup> Ibid., p. 1025.

<sup>103</sup> Petition to Board of Curators by W. R. Dodson, President of the YMCA, 30 November 1891, University of Missouri Archives, uw: 1/1/2, Box 1, Folder 11D.

<sup>104</sup> William Jefferson Lhamon, "History of the Bible College of Missouri." Unpublished Manuscript, Joint Collection of Missouri Western Historical Manuscript Collection-Columbia and State Historical Society of Missouri Manuscripts (nd).



- <sup>105</sup> Stephens, *History*, pp. 364–365.
- <sup>106</sup> Switzler, *History*, pp. 559, 1075.
- <sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1075.
- <sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 383–384.
- <sup>109</sup> Richard H. Jesse, “The Function of the State University,” 1901. Papers of Richard H. Jesse. Joint Collection University of Missouri Western Historical Manuscript Collection–Columbia State Historical Society of Missouri Manuscripts.
- <sup>110</sup> Richard H. Jesse, “The Most Effective Method of Chapel Worship in Universities,” 1904. Papers of Richard H. Jesse. Joint Collection University of Missouri Western Historical Manuscript Collection–Columbia State Historical Society of Missouri Manuscripts.
- <sup>111</sup> Switzler, *History*, p. 1085; University of Missouri Archives, Working Files and Correspondence of the Curators, uw: 1/6/1, Box 3, Folder 15.
- <sup>112</sup> Ringenberg, *College*, pp. 148–151.
- <sup>113</sup> Petition to Board of Curators by W. R. Dodson, President of the YMCA, 30 November, 1891, University of Missouri Archives, Working Files and Correspondence of the Curators, uw: 1/1/2, Box 1, Folder 11D.
- <sup>114</sup> Switzler, *History*, p. 1094.
- <sup>115</sup> Ringenberg, *College*, pp. 157–160.
- <sup>116</sup> Lhamon, “Bible College,” chapter 2, p. 3; chapter 3, p. 7.
- <sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, chapter 3, pp. 7–8.
- <sup>118</sup> See correspondence between Richard H. Jesse and Bishop Daniel S. Tuttle, March 11, 18, 22, 1898, and Jesse Bowman Young to Richard H. Jesse. University of Missouri Archives, Working Files and Correspondence of the Curators, uw: 1/1/2, Box 5, Folder 15.
- <sup>119</sup> Lhamon, “Bible College,” Chapter 4, pp. 6–7.
- <sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, chapter 4, p. 5.
- <sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, chapter 3, pp. 10–11; chapter 4, pp. 1–6, 9.
- <sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, chapter 4, pp. 7–8.
- <sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, chapter 4, p. 9.
- <sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, chapter 5, pp. 1–5.
- <sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, chapter 5, p. 5.
- <sup>126</sup> See “Inaugural Address of Samuel Laws,” p. 62.
- <sup>127</sup> R. H. Jesse, “On Religious Life in the University,” 1904. Papers of Richard H. Jesse, Joint Collection University of Missouri Western Historical Manuscript Collection–Columbia and State Historical Society of Missouri Manuscripts.
- <sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>130</sup> Lhamon, chapter 4, pp. 1–4; 8–9.
- <sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, chapter 8, pp. 2–5.
- <sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, chapter 8, p. 6.
- <sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, chapter 8, pp. 8–9.
- <sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, chapter 8, pp. 6–8.
- <sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, chapter 8, p. 9.
- <sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, chapter 8, p. 10.
- <sup>137</sup> *University of Missouri News Letter*, December 31, 1907, Vol. II, No. 2, p. 1.
- <sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, Richard H. Jesse’s “Letter of Resignation to the Board of Curators,” 27 December 1907. Working Files and Correspondence of the Curators, University of Missouri Archives, uw: 1/4/1, Box 11, Folder 1B–1907.
- <sup>139</sup> *University of Missouri News Letter*, December 31, 1907, p. 1.
- <sup>140</sup> *Official Retirement of President Richard Henry Jesse, Resolutions of the Board of Curators and of the University Council* (University of Missouri, 1908). Papers of Richard H. Jesse, Joint Collection University of Missouri Western Historical Manuscript Collection–Columbia and State Historical Society of Missouri Manuscripts.
- <sup>141</sup> John Bowman to Richard H. Jesse, 12 August 1911. Papers of Richard H. Jesse, Joint Collection University of Missouri Western Historical Manuscript Collection–Columbia and State Historical Society of Missouri Manuscripts.
- <sup>142</sup> Paul Ramsey and John F. Wilson, eds., *The Study of Religion in Colleges and Universities* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), pp. 3–21; Robert Michaelsen, *The Scholarly Study of Religion in College and University* (New Haven: The Society for Religion in Higher Education, 1965), pp. 1–12.





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